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ENGLAND  
UNDER  
THE COALITION



**WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.**



ENGLAND UNDER LORD BEACONSFIELD.  
SAMUEL SHARPE, Egyptologist, Philanthropist,  
and Translator of the Bible.

THE EARLY LIFE OF SAMUEL ROGERS.  
ROGERS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

2 vols.



ENGLAND  
UNDER  
THE COALITION

*THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND  
IRELAND FROM THE ELECTION OF 1835  
TO THE FALL OF THE MINISTRY  
IN 1892*

BY  
P. W. CLAYDEN

*SECOND EDITION*

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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As my object in writing this book was to put into the hands of candidates and electors, a detailed account of the origin and proceedings of the Government which was about to appeal to the country, it was necessarily issued before the General Election. The history was therefore incomplete. It was a story without an end, though it showed clearly what the end must be. Little more than nine months have passed, since I expressed in the preface to that first edition, the confident expectation that the election would result "in a great victory for Liberal principles and the Liberal party." Looking back upon the election now that its full consequences can be seen, we learn how complete and decisive the victory has been. What was only sure expectation in the spring of last year, is history now; and though the Coalition out of which the late Government sprang still exists, nobody expects that it will ever again hold the destinies of Great Britain and Ireland in its hands. I have therefore completed the book by telling the story of "England under the Coalition" to its fitting end. In doing so, I have endeavoured to add to its usefulness by making an index, which is not only a summary of the contents of the volume, but a guide to the political events, the measures, speeches, movements, and political phrases and watchwords of the time.

The book has received such cordial approval from public men, as to repay me amply for the trouble of writing it in the midst of pressing engagements. It has also had much notice, friendly and hostile, in the press. I have carefully studied every unfavourable criticism, with the object of



correcting inaccuracies and removing any unfairness which my critics might point out. But such charges of unfairness as have been brought against me have been made by writers who had evidently not read the book, but had merely glanced at the headings of the pages, and thought it safe to assume that a Liberal journalist and politician would misrepresent his opponents. I am glad therefore to be able to quote against such charges of one-sidedness the testimony of the oldest and ablest of the Conservative papers. *The Saturday Review*, with humorous exaggeration, says :

Mr. Clayden, as is known to people who are in the way to know such things, is an ardent Gladstonian, and "England under the Coalition" is, of course, written from the ardently Gladstonian point of view. To him the six years' rule of Lord Salisbury's Administration represents, as it were, a mere momentary triumph, permitted for inscrutable purposes, of the Evil Principle in politics. A writer who holds such a view as that, be he never so moderate and urbane in his mode of expression, can hardly avoid irritating us "children of darkness" by occasional glimpses of those complacent convictions which he does not obtrude. Nobody—except, perhaps, Long John Silver—ever yet felt quite at his ease in the presence of one who regards him as so completely reprobate as the enemies of Mr. Gladstone appear to Mr. Clayden.

But, Liberal fanatic as the Reviewer thinks me to be, he does me the justice of saying—

It is all the more to Mr. Clayden's credit that he does not hold all means to be lawful with the infidel, but tells his story with scrupulous fairness and accuracy as regards all the facts which he admits into it, and does not shirk any more of those facts than political human nature may be readily forgiven for evading. We have tried him with more than one crucial test of the party historian, and he stands them very well. The history of the Special Commission and the Pigott forgeries, of the excommunication of Mr. Parnell by Mr. Gladstone, and of the split in the Home Rule party which followed upon that pontifical act, is related with creditable fulness and freedom from bias, though in the two last cases there are noticeable omissions.

These omissions are, first, the silence of the Irish bishops after the trial in the divorce court, and secondly, the supposed effect of "the Nonconformist conscience" in forcing Mr. Gladstone to repudiate Mr. Parnell. But readers who will turn to page 503 will find not only the record of what happened, but the explanation of it. The Liberal leaders,



the Irish members who spoke at the Leinster Hall meeting, and the Irish priests and bishops, were led to believe that Mr. Parnell would retire of his own accord if a line of honourable retreat were left open. It was in leaving this open that the seeming delay occurred. As to "the Non-conformist conscience," I omitted the phrase deliberately; but on looking back I think the omission to be a mistake. I should perhaps have recorded, as an historical fact, that the Tory and Dissident Liberal writers who took up Mr. Parnell when his own party deposed him, invented the phrase, as an unworthy sneer at men who regarded the humiliating revelations made in the Divorce Court, as disqualifying Mr. Parnell for political leadership.

The chief inaccuracy into which I have fallen is in the description on page 57 of Lord Hartington and Lord Salisbury as "each adorned with the riband of the garter." The lofty disdain with which some of my critics have informed me that Lord Hartington was not a member of that order is, of course, fully justified, and I humble myself before them for my neglect to verify a statement of such transcendent importance. Historical accuracy will, however, be attained, even in this momentous matter, if the reader will turn to page 57 and cross out the word "each" at the beginning of the fourteenth line. When this rectification has been made, I will ask him to go on to page 328 and insert the words "at Doncaster" after the word "revenge" in the twenty-second line, and in page 443 to put in the words "for Sleaford" after the word "returned" in the third line from the bottom. By a similar oversight to that by which the word "each" was left in the account of Lord Hartington and Lord Salisbury at Her Majesty's Theatre, the by-elections at Doncaster and Sleaford were fully described without naming those electoral divisions. By printer's errors, too, Mr. Seymour Keay's majority is given on page 444 as 509 instead of 529, Mr. Cust's poll on page 469 is given as 4,226 instead of 4,236, and Mr. Sinclair's majority as 63 instead of 53, as it is correctly

stated to be in the full account of the election on page 352.

Some of my critics make much of what they describe as a very serious omission in an important part of the narrative. As my plan in this book, as in "England under Lord Beaconsfield," is to give the actual words of speakers and writers, and not merely my version of them, I may quote as the model of all these criticisms that of *The Guardian*, which says—

The Pigott letters are fully celebrated, but Parnell's famous admission in the witness-box is suppressed, and the verdict of the judges is compressed into the briefest notice.

The verdict of the judges is contained in 103 lines of their Report. My "notice" of it extends to more than 60 lines. Mr. Parnell's "famous admission in the witness-box" is "suppressed" by the judges before whom it was made. Mr. Parnell had told the House of Commons on the 7th of January, 1881, that secret societies had then ceased to exist in Ireland. Asked to explain this statement, before the Commission, he said with great recklessness that he supposed he had made it in order to deceive the House of Commons. This is the "famous admission" of which the writer in *The Guardian* speaks. But the judges, whom I have followed in the matter, not only suppress the "famous admission" in their Report, but indirectly contradict it by declaring that the statement made by Mr. Parnell to the House of Commons was true. They quote the declaration to the House of Commons, and add, "Mr. Parnell was then alluding to secret societies other than that of the Fenian conspiracy, and in our judgment Mr. Parnell was accurate when he made that statement." The Reviewer in *The Guardian*, like others who have charged me with the same suppression, probably did not know that the judges had taken this view of Mr. Parnell's statement.

P. W. CLAYDEN.

13, TAVISTOCK SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.

6th of March, 1893.

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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IN the following pages I have told the story of two Parliaments and three Governments. The period of six years and a half which the history covers has been one of unusual interest and importance, and it was impossible to bring out its true historical significance without taking it as a whole. The Government with whose origin and doings the book is principally concerned was a great experiment. A Tory administration governing for nearly six years without a Tory majority in the House of Commons is a new thing in English politics. It owed its existence to a group of men sitting on the Opposition benches, calling themselves Liberals but voting against the Liberal party, and covering a Tory policy with their protecting arms. I have told the story of the period as events have presented themselves from day to day to a political journalist whose duty it has been to note and criticize. This book, therefore, like "England under Lord Beaconsfield," is a history of political events, and the proportion in which I have presented them is necessarily that in which they appear to a Liberal politician. The work, like its predecessor, is issued on the eve of a general election, which will result, as I believe, in a great victory for Liberal principles and the Liberal party. No reader of the narrative will doubt what the indications of public feeling are.

I have acted on the principle which was adopted with much approval in "England under Lord Beaconsfield," that of giving the statements of public men in their own words. I am indebted for valuable help in the revision of the proofs to Mr. Alexander Paul, whose books on "The History of Reform" and "Short Parliaments" are models of exact information on the topics on which they treat. I have not cumbered the pages with references to the records and reports with which I have dealt, but I have kept them, and think that I shall be able to give full and quick verification for any statement that may be challenged. My hope for my book is that "England under the Coalition" may be as useful as I have been rejoiced to learn that "England under Lord Beaconsfield" was and is.

P. W. CLAYDEN.

13, TAVISTOCK SQUARE, LONDON.

*24th of May, 1892.*



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# ENGLAND

## UNDER

# THE COALITION.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### *THE ELECTION OF 1885 AND ITS RESULTS.*

THE House of Commons which had been elected in November and December, 1885, was the first House of Commons which represented the whole body of the householders and lodgers of the United Kingdom. The result of the appeal to new constituencies and an enlarged electorate had taken all parties by surprise. The Tories found themselves, by the help of their Irish allies, successful in the towns beyond all their hopes; the Liberals, disappointed in the boroughs, had found compensation in unexpected successes in the counties; and the Irish Nationalists had almost swept the board. When the gains and losses of the battle came to be summed up it was found that the English boroughs had returned 114 Tories and only 111 Liberals; but that the balance had been redressed by Wales and Scotland. The boroughs of the Principality had elected two Tories and nine Liberals; and those of the Northern Kingdom one Tory and 30 Liberals. The borough representation of Great Britain was therefore 150 Liberals to 117

Conservatives. In the English counties the Liberals had got 134 seats to 100 which had been kept by the Tories ; Wales followed with 18 Liberals and one Tory, and Scotland with 32 Liberals and seven Tories. With one Liberal and four Conservatives for the University seats, the English representation—exclusive of one Irish Nationalist for Liverpool—gave a Liberal majority of 28 in the English constituencies ; which Wales and Scotland swelled to 106. The Irish representation had undergone a still more remarkable change. Of 103 members for the sister island, 85 were Home Rulers and only 18 were Tories. Adding one Irish Nationalist for England, and two Tories for the Scotch Universities, the new House of Commons was exactly divided between the Liberals on one side and the Tories with their Irish allies on the other. Of its 670 members just one-half, or 335, were Liberals, 249 were Tories, and 86 were Irish Nationalists.

The success of the Tories in the English boroughs had been indicated beforehand by the municipal elections. For two or three years the first of November had cheered them with indications of a Tory leaning in the borough householders. The Liberals, on the other hand, had some hope that the counties would go for them, but not to the extent which they actually realized. In the first election after the great Reform Bill the counties chose 104 Liberals to 40 Tories ; in the election of 1835 the numbers were 74 to 100. In 1837 the Tories regained their ascendancy and had kept it ever since. Even the change in the county franchise made by the Reform Act of 1867, only resulted in consolidating the Tory predominance in the counties ; and the great Liberal enthusiasm of 1880 failed to do more than to increase the Liberal members for the counties to 54, while the Tories kept 118. The Liberal success in the counties in 1885 was therefore almost a revolution. But the greatest surprise of the election was the choice of the electors of London. London had always been regarded as a stronghold of Liberalism. In the old days



the City was Liberal; from the time of the Reform Act onwards the great London boroughs had always returned a Liberal majority. But in 1885, when London had at length got a fair share of the representation, it went round to the Tories. Of the 59 members given to London only 23 were Liberals, and 36 were Tories. The great manufacturing borough of West Ham, which lies just over the border, returned 2 Liberals—making for the whole Metropolis 25 Liberals to 36 Tories.

But the most striking change which household suffrage had made in the political constitution of the House of Commons was that which had taken place in the Irish representation. At the General Election in 1874 Ireland had returned 20 Liberals, 32 Tories, and 51 Nationalists. In 1880 the number of Liberals was reduced to 17, and the Tories to 25, while the Nationalists were 61. In 1885 not a single Liberal was elected, the number of Tories was reduced to 18, and the Nationalists numbered 85. In the three provinces of Leinster, Munster and Connaught, every seat, except the two for the University of Dublin, was carried by the Nationalists. In the province of Ulster sixteen Tories were returned and seventeen Nationalists, so that even Ulster gave a majority of one for Home Rule. Thus in the first Parliament in which the people of Ireland were free to give full expression to their wishes, they had sent an overwhelming majority to demand the restoration of their local legislature. That majority moreover represented a yet vaster preponderance in the constituencies. Nearly every one of the Irish Home Rulers was elected by an enormous majority. Nineteen of them were returned without a contest, while forty-nine other Nationalists polled more than four times as many votes as their opponents, and in twenty-nine of these cases more than ten times as many. The number of votes given to these forty-nine Nationalists was 212,159, while the votes divided between their forty-nine competitors were only 22,247, an average of 4,329 for each Nationalist, and of 454 for each Conservative. It

was not possible for a nation to give more emphatic expression to its wishes than Ireland had given at the ballot boxes, and it was universally felt that whatever might be thought of Home Rule as a question of Imperial policy, Ireland, at least, had emphatically expressed a national desire for it.

The effect of this decisive vote of the Irish people was soon seen in a rapid change of public opinion in the rest of the Kingdom. It is the fundamental doctrine of the English Constitution that the will of the people, expressed through their representatives, shall be law. This rule was acted upon in the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland; it was expressed by Lord Hartington in his statement that the disestablishment of the Church in Scotland is the concern of the Scottish people. In his election address in 1885 Mr. Gladstone said that Ireland had arrived at an important epoch in her history, and that she had claims to a special interpretation of the principles of Local Government. On the whole subject of Local Government Mr. Gladstone said, "Every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs is, in my view, not a source of danger, but a means of averting it, and is in the nature of a new guarantee for increased cohesion, happiness and strength." As soon as the public mind apprehended what had happened in Ireland it was felt that Home Rule was in the air. On the 12th of December, the day after the last returns from the Irish constituencies had been announced, *The Daily News* began its first leading article with the words "We are brought face to face with the question of Home Rule in Ireland, and we cannot doubt that it has already engaged the attention of Liberal statesmen." Further on in the same article *The Daily News* remarked, "Why should not a small Committee formed of both political parties, and including, of course, a proper representation of Mr Parnell's party, be brought together to consider, not whether Ireland ought or ought not to have

some sort of domestic Legislature, but what sort of domestic Legislature it would be wise and safe to give her? Since some such arrangement has to be made, it seems to us that this is at least one practical way in which it might be approached and even accomplished." Five days later, on the 17th of December, Mr. Chamberlain, speaking at the Birmingham Reform Club, said: "I have hoped—I have expressed publicly—the desire that the two democracies, the English and the Irish, moved by common aspiration and sympathetic appreciation, should march shoulder to shoulder along the paths of political freedom and progress. Mr. Parnell, indeed," Mr. Chamberlain said, "had alienated and embittered all sections of the Liberal party; but," he continued, "national questions of grave importance must not be prejudiced by personal considerations. We are face to face with a very remarkable demonstration of the Irish people. They have shown that so far as regards the great majority of them they are earnestly in favour of a change in the administration of their Government, and of some system which would give them a larger control of their domestic affairs. Well, we ourselves, by our public declarations and by our Liberal principles, are pledged to acknowledge the substantial justice of the claim." Mr. Chamberlain then spoke of rumours of negotiations between the Liberal leaders and Mr. Parnell, which he declared, so far as he was concerned, to be false, and he thought that as they affected other prominent members of the Liberal party they were equally groundless. "As to Mr. Gladstone," he continued, "we know what his opinion is from his public utterances. He has again and again said that the first duty of Liberal statesmen is to maintain the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of the Crown; but that, subject to that, he was prepared to give the largest possible measure of Local Government that could be conceived or proposed. Well, I entirely agree with those principles, and I have so much faith in the experience and patriotism of Mr. Gladstone,



that I cannot doubt that if he should ever see his way to propose any scheme of arrangement, I shall be able conscientiously to give it my humble support. But it is right, it is due to the Irish people, to say that all sections of the Liberal party, Radicals as much as Whigs, are determined that the integrity of the Empire shall be a reality, and not an empty phrase."

The rumour of which Mr. Chamberlain spoke spread rapidly. Like Richard's conscience it had a thousand several tongues, and every tongue brought in a several tale. Among other tales one seemed to have a show of authority. It was said that Mr. Gladstone had been at work upon a scheme for restoring the Irish Parliament, and an outline of the scheme was published in *The Leeds Mercury*. Mr. Gladstone at once repudiated it. "It is not an accurate representation of my views," said Mr. Gladstone, "but is, I presume, a speculation upon them. It is not published with my knowledge or authority, nor is any other beyond my own public declarations." Lord Hartington also issued a disclaimer, and Mr. John Morley, speaking at Newcastle on the shortest day, declared that the published scheme was the guess of "some enterprising newspaper gentlemen," and that "anybody could see at first blush that it was not a scheme that a man of Mr. Gladstone's knowledge and experience would launch in any way." In a forcible argument, based on the expression of Irish feeling at the polls, Mr. Morley passed in review the various plans for dealing with the Irish difficulty, and said, "I am, for one, forced to the conclusion that before many weeks are over you will see Parliament driven by irresistible circumstances to consider the giving to Ireland of some plan for a greatly extended government of herself." Glancing at the many difficulties in the way, Mr. Morley in a gleam of foresight said, "The task will be a long one. It will stir deep passions, it will perhaps destroy a great party. But whatever may be the outcome, I say it is the duty of every one of us Liberals to view the question as calmly as he can, and steadfastly feel-



ing that he is discharging as urgent a duty as has been imposed on English citizens since the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century." There were stories, too, of what the Government intended. Lord Carnarvon was still Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Lord Salisbury had not recalled the Newport speech in which he made a successful bid for the votes of the Irish electors, and the support of the Irish party in the elections. Nobody knew what the Ministers would do. They might be true to their Irish allies or they might turn round upon them. The general impression was expressed by Mr. Herbert Gladstone that the Tories would probably wash their hands of Mr. Parnell. The Christmas holidays found everybody and everything in suspense, and the closing political event of the year was the publication on Mr. Gladstone's birthday of a number of replies by Liberal members of the new Parliament to questions put to them by the Press Association on the Irish problem. The predominant opinion seemed to be that which was expressed by Mr. Osborne Morgan, that Lord Salisbury was now bound to make the first move towards establishing a *modus vivendi* with Ireland.

The Liberal members who expressed this opinion did not know how nearly the Conservative Ministry had come to the adoption of this policy. Lord Carnarvon emphatically denied that he had ever officially communicated with any Irish members, or consulted them as to proposals which were before the Cabinet; but he carefully avoided saying that he had not given them an outline of his own scheme, which he told the House of Lords was one for "united self-government." The Ministry had before them at Christmas a definite statement of Mr. Gladstone's views, as to the way in which the Irish question should be treated. He had met Mr. Arthur Balfour at Eaton Hall, the Duke of Westminster's Cheshire residence, about the middle of December, and they had chatted in the familiar confidence of private life, and in an entirely informal way about the state of Ireland, and the change that the election had

made in the Irish representation. In the course of the talk Mr. Gladstone expressed the opinion that if some substantial concession was not quickly made to the demands of the Irish people, as expressed by their representatives, the party of violence would take the matter up and there might be renewed attempts to enforce their demands by outrages in England. Mr. Balfour, according to his own version of the story, remarked: "In other words, we are to be blown up and stabbed if we do not grant Home Rule by the end of the session." In the same spirit Mr. Gladstone replied, with a laugh, "I understand that the time is shorter than that." Mr. Gladstone subsequently wrote to Mr. Balfour—"On reflection, I think that what I said to you in our conversation at Eaton may have amounted to the conveyance of a hope that the Government would take a strong and early decision on the Irish question. For I spoke of the stir in men's minds, and of the urgency of the matter, to both of which every day's post brings me new testimony. This being so, I wish, under the very peculiar circumstances of the case, to go a step further, and say that I think it will be a public calamity if this great subject should fall into the lines of party conflict. I feel sure the question can only be dealt with by a government, and I desire, specially on grounds of public policy, that it should be dealt with by the *present* Government. If, therefore, they bring in a proposal for settling the whole question of the future Government of Ireland my desire will be, reserving, of course, necessary freedom, to treat it in the same spirit in which I have endeavoured to proceed in respect to Afghanistan and with respect to the Balkan Peninsula."

\* This letter was written on the 20th of December, 1885, and Mr. Balfour replied to it on the 22nd. "I have, as yet, had no opportunity of showing it to Lord Salisbury, or of consulting him as to its contents, but I am sure he will receive without surprise the statement of your earnest hope that the Irish question should not fall into the lines of

party conflict. If the ingenuity of any Ministry is sufficient to devise some adequate and lasting remedy for the chronic ills of Ireland I am certain it will be the wish of the leaders of the Opposition, to whichever side they may belong, to treat the question as a national and not as a party one, though I fear that under our existing Parliamentary system this will not prove so easy when we are dealing with an integral portion of the United Kingdom, as it proved when we were concerned with the remote regions of Roumelia and Afghanistan." Mr. Gladstone replied on the next day that while expressing a desire that the Government should act, he was not himself acting, that so long as he entertained the hope connected with that wish he should not publicly state his views, but only make known his anxiety that the Government should decide and act in this great matter. Mr. Balfour answered that he had shown Mr. Gladstone's last letter to Lord Salisbury, who wished to express his great sense of the courteous and conciliatory spirit in which it was written. He thought, however, that it would be better not to communicate the views of the Government, but to wait till Parliament met. Mr. Gladstone quite agreed with this remark and said he had not suggested any such communication. When this correspondence was published in the midst of the election preparations in 1886, Mr. Balfour intimated that there was nothing in it which indicated what plans Mr. Gladstone had in his mind, and that he only assumed Home Rule to be meant in consequence of the unauthorized rumour as to Mr. Gladstone having thought out a Home Rule scheme which was published in *The Leeds Mercury*.

The historical interest of this correspondence is in the evidence it supplies of the desire of Mr. Gladstone to settle the Irish question without party conflict. It gave the Conservative Government a chance. They had already had before them Lord Carnarvon's scheme, a complete scheme of Home Rule worked out in all its details, but only to come into operation gradually, or, in Mr. Parnell's



words to Lord Ribblesdale, Home Rule to be granted to Ireland by degrees on her preferment. They knew from Lord Carnarvon's unofficial and unauthorized communications with Mr. Parnell and Mr. Justin McCarthy, that the Irish leaders were ready to accept Lord Carnarvon's scheme as a settlement, and they now learned that the Liberal leader would co-operate with them in carrying it out. It was a golden opportunity such as only now and then Heaven grants to statesmen. If courage had mounted with occasion, everything might have been done. If Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour had been the men to grasp the skirts of happy chance they might have reached "Fortune's crowning slope," and settled in a single session the quarrel and difficulty of seven hundred years. But they were not the men to take occasion by the hand, and it passed them by.

As Mr. Balfour has told us that he gave several persons an account of the conversation with Mr. Gladstone at Eaton Hall, the rumour about Mr. Gladstone's views is probably accounted for, and of course the outline in *The Leeds Mercury* of a Home Rule scheme seemed to give it sanction. Perhaps this very offer of co-operation from the Liberal chief helped to drive the Tory leaders back, for very early in the new year the voices of rumour took another tone. It became known that the Tory horse had refused to take the Home Rule fence, and had bolted off at a tangent. Lord Salisbury had at first counted the Irish members as allies. On no other plea could his Ministry have ventured to keep its place and meet the new Parliament. In 1868 Mr. Disraeli had resigned on the second of December as soon as the result of the elections was known; in 1874 Mr. Gladstone had followed the new precedent and given up office with similar promptitude; and in 1880 Mr. Disraeli, then Lord Beaconsfield, had followed the custom thus established. Had Lord Salisbury not regarded the Irish members as his allies, he would not have ventured, in face of this thrice-armed precedent, to



meet the new House of Commons. With the Irish Nationalists as neutrals he was in a minority of 86 ; with them as opponents he was in a minority of 172. But the Nationalists were his friends. They had stood by him all over Great Britain ; they had appealed to their friends in the British constituencies to vote for the Conservative candidates, and a large part of the Tory success in the boroughs was due to their capture of the Irish vote. In summing up the result of the election Sir William Harcourt said that the Irish alliance had given the Tories five-and-twenty seats. Mr. Parnell and his friends had therefore done the Tories an essential service, and were looking for their wages. But they had not done enough. In spite of their utmost efforts, just one half of the new House belonged to their Liberal opponents. Another dozen votes and their alliance would have enabled the Tories to keep in power ; as it was the alliance was not worth the sacrifice. There was a struggle within the Tory party, and in the end the old Tory element got the ascendancy. Lord Carnarvon was repudiated and his Home Rule scheme was dropped. Before Parliament met, the victorious party in the Cabinet began to drop hints of coercion, and everybody knew that Lord Salisbury's Ministry was doomed to a speedy fall.

The first act of the new Parliament recorded a Tory disappointment, and on its second day brought a great Tory defeat. It had been arranged that in case of a Ministerial majority Sir Matthew White Ridley, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, should be the new Speaker ; but he had been defeated at the ballot-box, and was not in the House. The Government, therefore, proposed to re-elect Mr. Arthur Peel, whose re-appointment was consequently unanimous. Then followed a sudden frustration of Tory hopes. All through the old Parliament they had fought in the name of religion and of everything sacred against Mr. Bradlaugh's admission. On the opening day of the new Parliament a special whip was sent out urging Conservative members to be present at a debate and division on this

question. But as soon as the Speaker had taken the oath he announced that he had received a letter from the Chancellor of the Exchequer urging that Mr. Bradlaugh should not be allowed to take the oath. In reply the Speaker announced that he could not allow any interference with Mr. Bradlaugh if he wished to be sworn. "When a member comes to this table," said the Speaker, "and offers to take the oath, I know no right whatever to intervene between him and the form of legal and statutable obligation." The Chancellor of the Exchequer, rising amid Tory cheers and Liberal cries of "Order," made two futile attempts to raise a debate or to make a protest, but was at once stopped by the Speaker; and the long controversy over Mr. Bradlaugh was thus peremptorily closed in the way the Liberal party had contended it should be.

It was soon clear enough that the alliance between the Tory Ministers and the Irish Nationalists was at an end. On the day after the new House assembled Lord Carnarvon came back from Ireland, and there were rumours—premature rather than false—that he had resigned. It was known that the Cabinet would propose a Local Government Bill for England and Wales, and it was believed that they would bring one forward for Ireland as well, and Lord Carnarvon had come over for the meeting of the Cabinet in which the decisive resolution was to be taken. The Cabinet met on the 15th, and Lord Carnarvon was present; it met again on the 16th, and Lord Carnarvon was again present; and on that morning the papers published a letter from him and a reply by Lord Salisbury, explaining that his resignation of the Viceroyalty was not due to any difference of opinion between him and his colleagues. On the 19th of January Lord Salisbury received at the Foreign Office five deputations on Irish affairs. They asked for a Coercion Bill, and Lord Salisbury gave them an answer which encouraged rather than depressed them. Mr. Gladstone refused to receive them on the ground that it was for the Ministers to propose plans, and for him, "as an unofficial member of

Parliament, to give them careful and dispassionate consideration." The Ministers, however, had no plans. It was not for them to take thought for the morrow; as Ministers they would have no to-morrow. To raise an alarm about the state of Ireland, fling out a wild defiance at their Irish allies, and fall back at once on the old policy of coercion, was the course to which their Tory instincts urged them. It was certain that they would be defeated on the Address, and they might fall with dignity in the sacred cause of order. The resolution was not fully taken, and the Queen's Speech was prepared in view only of such a policy being finally decided on. The secret of the alternative was well kept. An elaborate scheme for the reform of Procedure was circulated, and it was announced that the Government would at once ask for the whole time of the House of Commons to get it quickly passed. This scheme, with the promised county government reform in England and Ireland, had no reality in it. It was a promissory note which would never have to be met.

The Queen's Speech was long. It told of the completion of the arrangement set on foot by Lord Granville on the subject of the boundaries of Afghanistan; of the change in Eastern Roumelia; of the convention with the Porte under which Commissioners had been appointed on behalf of England and Turkey, to confer with the Khedive, "and to report upon the measures required for securing the defence of Egypt, and the stability and efficiency of the government of that country." The war against Thebaw, King of Ava, a proposal to inquire into the operation of the statutes by which India was transferred from the Company to the Crown; a reference to the Newfoundland difficulty, the Agreement with Spain as to the Caroline Islands, and the International Copyright Convention, completed the foreign part of the Speech. Then came what the world was waiting for. After a brief expression of regret at the depressed condition of trade and agriculture, the Speech continued, "I have seen with deep sorrow the



renewal, since I last addressed you, of the attempt to excite the people of Ireland to hostility against the Legislative Union between that country and Great Britain. I am resolutely opposed to any disturbance of that fundamental law, and in resisting it I am convinced that I shall be heartily supported by my Parliament and people." The next, and longer paragraph recognized there had been during the past year no increase of crime, but said "there is in many places a concerted resistance to the enforcement of legal obligations, and I regret that the practice of organized intimidation continues to exist." The paragraph concluded with the hint of a Coercion Bill. The rest of the speech was unimportant. Nobody cared for the sketch of a programme which was not to be carried out. When it was read in the Commons the references to Ireland were received with cheers and counter cheers. The Tories were rapturous over the description of the Union as "that fundamental law," and the Home Rulers met it with loud derision. Mr. Gladstone, in his speech on the Address, said he did not know that the phrase "fundamental law" was known to the Constitution. He pointed out the difference between this paragraph of the Speech and the language used by Ministers of the Crown before the election, asked whether it was intended to make the difference a matter of Ministerial explanation and, amid loud cheers, expressed the hope that there was no intention of interposing "any obstacle in the way of preliminary judgment as a bar to the fullest exposition by Irish members of whatever they may think it right to urge on behalf of their country." Sir Michael Hicks-Beach in his reply made the Irish question the chief burden of his speech, said the verdict of the nation, as between the two parties, was uncertain, and challenged the Opposition to move an amendment to the Address. The Government was already riding for a fall. They wished the decisive division to be taken on their Irish policy, so that they might pose as martyrs to the great cause of the Unity of the Empire. But this happy con-



summation was denied them. The Opposition refused to challenge their Irish policy until the actual proposals were before them. The Government, however, had no proposals to make. They were looking for a policy, and before they found it Mr. Jesse Collings put down an Amendment to the Address which forced their hands.

On the day on which the Queen's Speech was delivered, it became known that Mr. W. H. Smith had been appointed Chief Secretary in succession to Sir William Hart-Dyke. Lord Carnarvon's resignation had already been announced, and in the debate on the Address, Lord Granville had remarked on the curious reason given for his resignation, that he had always meant to retire after a few months. "Lord Carnarvon," said Lord Granville, "appears to have calculated that the career of the Government would last exactly six months. If he was to be only six months Lord Lieutenant how is it that the announcement was made only a few days before the meeting of Parliament? The difficulty becomes more puzzling when a report of the resignation of the Chief Secretary remains uncontradicted for several days, after which he states, not that the announcement is untrue, but that it is premature." Lord Granville's inference was that the whole business was in a state of chaos. There were two parties in the Cabinet—one for Local Government and no Coercion, the other for Coercion and no Local Government. Mr. Smith's appointment as Chief Secretary was a temporary compromise between them; an *ad interim* arrangement while the Government hesitated at the parting of the ways. It was announced by Lord Salisbury in his reply to Lord Granville, who had asked with respect to the vague statement in the Queen's Speech, "Is this the proper manner of dealing with a vital question?" Lord Salisbury answered, "The Government of Ireland has been changed. As the noble Lord probably knows, my distinguished friend Mr. Smith undertakes the Secretaryship of Ireland, which means practically that the Government of Ireland will be committed to his care. Undoubtedly we

shall not have long to wait for his distinct opinion as to the precise details of any legislation we shall have to recommend." Sir Michael Hicks-Beach said in the Commons that whether it was possible to deal with the Irish problem by further application of the powers of the ordinary law or whether it was necessary for the Government to ask for additional powers were questions to which Mr. Smith was to give his "immediate and earnest attention."\* This was on Thursday. On Saturday the 23rd of January, Mr. Smith was at the meeting of the Cabinet, and only on that evening did he enter on the discharge of what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had described as "a difficult and anxious task at a very dangerous time," by proceeding to his post.

\* The attitude of the Government was admirably summarised in a *jeu d'esprit* by my friend and colleague Mr. Alexander Paul, which was published in *The Daily News*.

#### DIALOGUE OF THE DAY.

LORD GRANVILLE. Your Irish policy is dark,  
Elucidatory remark  
Is wanted to explain its pith.

MINISTERS. Wait till we hear from Mr. Smith.

MR. GLADSTONE. Strategic cunning that may be,  
But Ireland's dire emergency  
Requires that you should act forthwith.

MINISTERS. Wait till we hear from Mr. Smith.

LORD GRANVILLE. But this obscure coercion hint  
Which, read by light of Tory print,  
Seems like a party shibboleth?

MINISTERS. Wait till we hear from Mr. Smith.

LORD KIMBERLEY. But what about Carnarvon, then?  
Saith he not whether, where, and when  
You need coerce our kin and kith?

MINISTERS. Oh, wait to hear from Mr. Smith!

THE ORANGE MEMBERS. Well *we* dislike this foil and fence,  
And work postponed on such pretence.  
Is your coercion plan a myth?

MINISTERS. Be patient till we hear from Smith.

GENERAL CHORUS. They have no words to greet us with  
But "wait to hear from Mr. Smith."

Mr. Smith got to Dublin on Sunday, and his chief difficulty and the chief danger of the time was a heavy fall of snow. He bore the sword of State at Lord Carnarvon's levée on Monday, was sworn in before the Privy Council on Tuesday, and came back home on Tuesday night. The Government could not wait for his opinion. His most immediate attention to the problem was not prompt enough for their party needs. For on Monday Mr. Collings's fatal motion was close at hand. It was a censure on them for not announcing measures for the relief of the agricultural classes, especially for giving them facilities to obtain allotments and small holdings. On Monday night, therefore, Lord Salisbury announced in the Lords that in twenty-four or forty-eight hours the Government would introduce its proposals to remedy the "terrible and scandalous state of things" in Ireland. But the Government had not forty-eight hours to live ; and the announcement had to be made in twenty-four hours. So on Tuesday evening, just before Mr. Smith started on his journey home, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that on Thursday the 28th of January the Chief Secretary would introduce a Coercion Bill for Ireland, and ask for precedence for it over all other business. This measure was to be followed by a Bill dealing with the Land Question by an extension of the Ashbourne Act of the previous Session. A little later in the evening Mr. Chamberlain put some questions about a rumour that Lord Salisbury was coercing Greece. The answers were unsatisfactory, and he gave notice to call attention to the subject on the Report stage of the Address, "if we ever get to it," added Mr. Chamberlain amid peals of Opposition laughter.

If the debate on Mr. Collings's amendment could have been prolonged till Thursday, the Government would have fallen on the field of its own selection. But it could not be prolonged. Mr. Collings moved the amendment in an excellent speech ; Mr. Gladstone spoke in hearty support of it ; and Mr. Arch made a good maiden speech in its

favour. Mr. Goschen and Lord Hartington spoke against the motion, which Mr. Chamberlain energetically supported. On a division the numbers were 329 against 250—a majority of 79 against the Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer at once asked the House to adjourn till Thursday, an Irish member exclaiming, “Don’t forget Coercion on Thursday!” On Thursday it was announced in both Houses that Lord Salisbury had gone down to Osborne, and an adjournment till Monday was taken. Lord Salisbury’s resignation was accepted on Thursday, and at midnight on Friday Mr. Gladstone received a rather tardy summons to see Her Majesty. The delay was caused by an effort on Lord Salisbury’s part to make arrangements which would have precluded the necessity of sending for Mr. Gladstone. In conveying the Queen’s summons to the Liberal leader, Sir Henry Ponsonby had an interview with him of half an hour’s duration, in which he conveyed the Queen’s considerate wish that Mr. Gladstone should take down to Osborne with him the names of those on whose co-operation he could depend. The whole of Saturday and such part of Sunday as two attendances at church left open were spent in consultations with his colleagues, and on Monday morning Mr. Gladstone went down to Osborne prepared to form a Ministry, hurrying back at night for his daughter’s wedding the next morning. In Parliament that evening the brief announcement was made that the Government had resigned and that Mr. Gladstone was forming an administration, and both Houses then adjourned till Thursday. On Thursday there was nothing to do but to move the writs, and Mr. Arnold Morley, who was much cheered on making his first appearance at the table as Patronage Secretary to the Treasury, having moved them, the House adjourned till Saturday. On Saturday the remaining writs were moved, and the House adjourned till the 18th of February. On the same day the Tory Ministers went down to Osborne to give up the seals of office and their Liberal successors went down to take them.



## CHAPTER II.

*THE NEW GOVERNMENT.*

THE New Cabinet consisted of fifteen members : Mr. Gladstone was First Lord of the Treasury and Lord Privy Seal ; Lord Herschell was Lord Chancellor ; Lord Spencer was Lord President ; Sir William Harcourt, Chancellor of the Exchequer ; Mr. Childers, Home Secretary ; Lord Rosebery, Foreign Secretary ; Lord Granville, Secretary for the Colonies ; Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Secretary for War ; Lord Kimberley, Secretary for India ; Mr. George Trevelyan, Secretary for Scotland ; Lord Ripon, First Lord of the Admiralty ; Mr. John Morley, Chief Secretary for Ireland ; Mr. Mundella, President of the Board of Trade ; and Mr. Chamberlain, President of the Local Government Board. Outside the Cabinet Lord Aberdeen undertook the duty of Viceroy of Ireland ; Lord Wolverton was Postmaster General ; Sir Lyon Playfair was Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education ; Mr. Heneage, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Mr. John Mellor was Judge Advocate General ; Sir Charles Russell, Attorney General ; and Sir Horace Davey, Solicitor General. The Under Secretaries were Mr. Broadhurst at the Home Office, Mr. Bryce at the Foreign Office, Mr. Osborne Morgan at the Colonial Office, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth at the India Office, Lord Sandhurst at the War Office, Mr. C. T. Acland at the Board of Trade, and Mr. Jesse Collings at the Local Government Board. Mr. Jesse Collings was afterwards unseated at Ipswich, under circumstances which created universal

sympathy with him as the victim of circumstances over which he had no control. The re-elections were exceedingly fortunate. Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Childers, Mr. Trevelyan, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, and Mr. Mundella were re-elected without opposition. Mr. Morley, Sir Charles Russell, and Mr. Heneage had to fight for their seats, Lord Salisbury expressly sanctioning the attack upon them by writing a letter to the Tory candidate for South Hackney approving his resolve to stand on the ground that "No opportunity should be lost of awakening the people to the danger by which they are menaced, that the dismemberment of the Empire will be thrust upon them before the constituencies have been able to express any opinion upon it." The attack was repulsed with heavy loss. Sir C. Russell's majority in Hackney was increased from 942 to 1,195; Mr. Heneage's from 814 to 1,060; and Mr. John Morley's from 629 to 2,721.

While these re-elections were proceeding London had a fright such as it had not experienced since the historic 10th of April, 1848. There had been gatherings of unemployed men on many successive days in Trafalgar Square. On Monday, the 8th of February, two meetings were held, one intended to "protest, denounce, and remonstrate against a false commercial system"—in other words, to turn the prevailing distress to the account of a group of London Tory and Protectionist agitators—the other by the Social Democratic League. The speakers at each meeting denounced the other assemblage; and while the meetings were proceeding a gang of roughs—whether led by Socialist fanatics or not could not be ascertained—marched off westward along Pall Mall, unobserved by the police. They gathered numbers and courage as they went. At first they bonneted respectable people; then they threw stones and broke the windows of the Thatched House Club, the Conservative Club, and the Carlton. Turning up St. James's Street, and some into Regent Street, they broke more

windows and pillaged shops ; in Piccadilly the destruction was still greater, and in South Audley Street and North Audley Street the pillage and wreckage were at their worst. The police had by this time recovered from their surprise, and succeeded in breaking up the mob, many of whom went to Hyde Park, held a meeting, and did more window-breaking on their return. On the next day the shops in the West End were shut, and a feeling of insecurity and alarm spread all over London. On Wednesday the alarm increased to an unreasoning panic. The shops were shut and business was at a standstill. Rumours of the "mob" ran all round the town. Now it was in the East End, advancing on the city, then at Islington or at Camden Town. At one time in the day it was announced that the bridges were being defended against a mob from South London, and in the neighbourhood of the Elephant and Castle the police told the shopkeepers to put up their shutters, as a mob was expected from the South and South-East, while in the same South-East, at Greenwich and Deptford, the mob was awaited from the West and North-West. In the afternoon the tradesmen west of the City barricaded their shops ; the Government Offices were put in a state of defence, and the iron gates at Charing Cross Station, and the Houses of Parliament were closed. There was no mob anywhere, but there were rumours of it everywhere. It was always coming from somewhere else. The nearest approach to an outbreak was a disorderly gathering in Cumberland Market which was dispersed by the police with some difficulty. At night all was quiet, and on Thursday men began to laugh at their fears. Some controversy followed as to the responsibility for the occurrence, and in the end Sir Edmund Henderson resigned and Sir Charles Warren was appointed Commissioner of Police in his place. From London as a centre a sort of epidemic of social disturbance spread to some of the great towns, where it was resolutely dealt with ; but the political result of the riots was not seen as yet.

The first meeting of the new Cabinet was held on Monday the 15th of February. On the next day a letter was published which Mr. Gladstone had sent to Lord De Vesci a few days before in reply to a communication on Irish rents. In this letter Mr. Gladstone called attention to two passages in the address issued to his constituents on seeking re-election. The first was "There were three great Irish questions demanding our care—social order, the settlement of the land question, and a widely prevalent desire for self-government extending beyond what is felt in Great Britain as to local affairs, but necessarily subject, in all respects, to the law of Imperial unity." The second was, "It will be among the first duties of the new Government to use its official opportunities for forming such an estimate as only a Ministry can form of the social state of Ireland, especially with regard to crime, to the fulfilment of contracts, to the pressure of low prices upon agriculture, and to personal liberty of action." Mr. Gladstone now invited free communications on these points from all classes of the Irish people "which may aid my colleagues and myself in the difficult task of determining how we may best, at this important juncture, discharge our duties to Ireland and to the Empire." This letter showed that the new Government was not ready to produce its Irish measures as soon as it was appointed. Everybody knew that its policy was to be one of conciliation and not coercion; of freedom and self-government for Ireland instead of repression; but the form in which this policy should be embodied had not even been fully considered and discussed.

When Parliament met on the 18th of February most of the Ministers—except Mr. Gladstone—were in their places. Lord Hartington's arrival was looked for with curiosity. Where would he seat himself? Presently he came quietly in from behind the Speaker's chair, walked in front of his old colleagues, and turning up the gangway took the corner seat on the bench behind them. His action was greeted by the Tories with a cheer, which he recognized with a smile.



While the writs for the re-election of Sir E. Reed, Mr. Mellor, and Lord Kilcoursie were being moved, Mr. Gladstone entered. He was brought to the table by Mr. Spencer and Mr. Cyril Flower, was sworn, and took his seat in his old place. In stating the order of business the Prime Minister proposed to refer the question of Procedure to a Select Committee, and named the 22nd of March as the day on which he could "make further indication to the House as to either the whole or some part of the proposals we may have to make for dealing in a substantive and positive, and I hope, in somewhat permanent, form with the great question of Ireland;" a statement which Sir M. Hicks-Beach declared to be "somewhat surprising." When the debate on the Address was resumed the meaning of this expression came out. The Tories were in a hurry. They wanted the Government measures at once. Sir William Harcourt in reply made fun of Mr. Smith's hurried visit to Ireland to find a policy, and Mr. Chamberlain said the late Government appeared to have confined themselves to the single point of outrages in Ireland to justify themselves in introducing a Coercive measure. "The present Government have, however, always said," added Mr. Chamberlain, "that in no case will they limit their consideration to questions such as that. There is the question of social order, and there is the question of the demands, which are for the first time formally presented to the House by Irish representatives who are clearly entitled to speak for five-sixths of the Irish people. These are things which we insist on considering together, and we must have time to do so." Mr. Gladstone quoted precedents for taking time: "We have before us," he said, "a great and complex question, the most complex I have ever had to deal with." Seeing that the late Ministry with only 250 supporters out of 670 had resolved on meeting Parliament, he concluded that they were continuing their association with Mr. Parnell, and intended to apply to the Irish problem some more permanent method than that of special criminal legislation. "I should have

rejoiced," he added, "if the Government had arrived at the bold resolution to face the situation as a substantive question."

The course taken in this debate revealed the tactics of the late Ministry. They had suddenly discovered the social war in Ireland in order to justify the coercive proceedings which they had as suddenly resolved upon ; and they now kept up a well-feigned alarm in order to embarrass their successors and force Mr. Gladstone's hand. The one thing needful, as Mr. Chamberlain said, was time for inquiry and consideration ; and time was consequently the one thing the Tory Opposition denied them. In the discussion on the Irish estimates on the 20th of February, Mr. John Morley expressed his full sympathy with the unfortunate victims of the social circumstances in which Ireland was placed, and added, "The question whether or not the forces of the Crown are to be used in carrying out every eviction for which the shadow of a legal title or justification can be made out, is one which the executive Ministers must decide for themselves upon their own personal responsibility on each case as it rises, and I, for one, am not prepared to admit that they are justified in every case where a shadow of a legal title can be made out in bringing military force to bear to execute decrees which, on grounds of public policy as well as of natural equity, may seem inadvisable." So far as he had been able to gather information at the Irish office, he thought Mr. Dillon to be right in saying that the rents were being paid very fairly indeed, and that the cases where rents were not being paid seemed, so far as he could understand, to be mostly cases where it was as absolutely impossible for the tenants to pay as it was for many tenants in England to pay their rents. This wise and generous declaration of a principle on which a Tory Government had to act before the year was out, was made the subject of many alarms. Lord Cranbrook at once asked for information on the present condition of Ireland "in respect to boycotting and such outrages," and received a spirited reply

from Lord Spencer, who said that during his eight years of experience as Lord Lieutenant he always thought it a very grave thing indeed when they were called upon to send Her Majesty's troops in support of the civil power; and that so far as reluctance to use these forces was concerned, he entirely concurred in what Mr. Morley had said. Lord Salisbury, however, insisted that the Chief Secretary's words amounted to "a no-writ manifesto." He asked for an assurance that the military should be employed if it were necessary, in order to exact the fulfilment of contracts, whether those contracts were in equity or in policy pleasing to Mr. Morley or not. There were questions, too, about the National League Land Courts, which the Government were watching.

The outcry for the production of the Government scheme for dealing with Ireland was incessant both in and out of Parliament, and constant efforts were made to raise apprehensions respecting it, and especially to create alarm as to what was occurring in Ireland. On the other hand, Home Rule was everywhere discussed and Liberal organizations and public meetings were passing resolutions in its favour. The Tory policy in these circumstances was to organize resistance and rouse religious antagonism and the jealousy of race. In the last week in February Lord Randolph Churchill went on a Mission of Confusion to Belfast. It had been planned as an appeal to the Orangemen of Ulster against the Home Rule Bill, but no Home Rule Bill had been produced, and Lord Randolph's appeals so far missed their point. In his principal speech he accused Mr. Parnell of legal responsibility for murder, assassination, and dynamite, and said that Mr. Gladstone had seized power by "a most profligate manœuvre." He concluded by a vague hint of civil war if a Home Rule Bill was passed. In a speech at Manchester on the 3rd of March Lord Randolph invented the term "Separatists" as the description of his opponents. Further hints of confusion were thrown out by Lord Salisbury in a speech



at the Crystal Palace, at a meeting held on the same day to rejoice over the Tory successes in Lambeth. He spoke strongly against any system of Land Purchase, which "would sweep like a hurricane over the land" and drive landlords, bankers, and capitalists away; adopted Lord Randolph Churchill's description of the defeat of the Government as a profligate manœuvre, and said that the people of Ulster were going to be handed over "bound hand and foot, to their hereditary enemies." He further hinted that the House of Lords would throw out a Home Rule Bill, and suggested that Mr. Morley would call on the people to beat down the resistance of the House of Lords. "If that happened," said Lord Salisbury, "I venture to say that the illegality would not be entirely or mainly on the inhabitants of Ulster, but that it would be a very wholesome thing that in the last and terrible issue, the House of Lords should not have to rely alone upon its constitutional authority, but should have a taste of physical force in the background as well." The party of order received this threat of civil war with strident cheers.

An entirely different spirit pervaded a more important political utterance of Lord Hartington's at the dinner of the Eighty Club on the 5th of March. The Eighty Club was established not only to commemorate the Liberal success in 1880, but to ensure like victories at future elections. It is a propagandist organization of the younger Liberals. Lord Hartington, who was the chief guest at the dinner of which Lord Richard Grosvenor was chairman, and at which Lord Northbrook and Sir Henry James were present, spoke of himself as an independent member of the Liberal party, and expressed the great regret with which he found himself "for a time separated from, or at any rate not in complete harmony with, those with whom I have for so many years found my chief pride and pleasure in acting." After discussing the General Election and admitting that the return of eighty-five Parnellites was "a proof of the existence in Ireland, amongst a large portion of the popula-



tion, of a desire for some change in the Parliamentary relations between this country and Ireland," but not sufficiently decisive to act upon, he proceeded to speak of the Tory policy. "The late Attorney-General for Ireland told us last night," said Lord Hartington, "that the Conservative Government never had any intention of giving up repressive legislation permanently, but they thought that the interval between the accession of the Conservative Government and the reassembling of the new Parliament—an interval, by the way, in which the General Election took place—might be safely tided over by the abandonment of the Crimes Act. Well, I say, if that is the true account of the motives which prompted the Conservative policy, a more rash or more reckless policy was never adopted by any responsible statesman in a most critical moment." Lord Salisbury had told them that it was a question between the possibility of the formation of a Conservative Government and the re-enactment of the Crimes Act. "Deliberately they chose the former alternative." Passing on to what he described as "a novel aspect of the Irish question," in "the new attitude which has been assumed by Mr. Gladstone and by the Government which he has formed," Lord Hartington said he was not going to say one word of complaint or charge against Mr. Gladstone for the attitude he had taken. "I think no one," he continued, "who has read or heard during a long series of years, the declarations of Mr. Gladstone on the question of self-government in Ireland can be surprised at the tone of his present declaration. Lord Randolph Churchill, himself an attentive student of Mr. Gladstone's speeches, can find no later date than 1871 in which Mr. Gladstone has spoken strongly against the demands of the Irish people for greater self-government. Well, when I look back to those declarations which Mr. Gladstone made in his place in Parliament, which have not been infrequent, when I look to the increased definiteness which was given to those declarations in his address to the electors of Mid-Lothian, and in his

Mid-Lothian speeches ; when I look to the announcements which—however unauthorized and inaccurate—have never been asserted to be, and could not have been, mere figments of the imagination, but expressed more or less accurately not the conclusions which Mr. Gladstone had formed, but the ideas which he was considering in his own mind,—I say, when I consider all these things, I feel that I have not, and that no one else has, any right whatever to complain of the tone of the declarations which Mr. Gladstone has recently made on this subject.” This important declaration led up to an appeal to treat Mr. Gladstone’s proposals with fair and independent judgment. He would not countenance any attempt to hurry the Government ; and although he had not been able to be a party to the policy of examination and inquiry, he trusted that he might never do anything to put any obstacles in the way.

Lord Hartington’s speech defined the attitude in which at that moment he and other Independent Liberals stood to the Ministry. Sir Henry James, who had declined the Lord Chancellorship, had told his constituents only three days before Lord Hartington spoke, that he was still a sincere Liberal, never more so. “I am going to take up my abode in no cave,” he said. “The climate of a cave would not suit me.” Like Lord Hartington his desire was to support the Liberal Government whenever he could. It was not, however, from Liberals outside the Ministerial ranks, but from within the Cabinet that the chief difficulty came. The second week in March brought rumours of difference of opinion among the Ministers, and of pending resignations. Mr. Trevelyan was first said to be dissatisfied and then Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. John Morley, speaking at a Conference of the London and Counties Liberal Union on the 2nd of March, remarked of the calm that then prevailed : “I am not sure that it is not like the calm of the glassy waters that are on the edge of the bend of Niagara. It may be that we are on the eve of events which may divide our party and present issues which the

country is not prepared to face in our sense." The Ministerial re-elections seemed, however, to indicate that the country was ready for a final attempt to settle the Irish question on the only basis which now seemed possible. Mr. Morley's words were regarded as a warning of the differences now publicly spoken of, though it was not on Home Rule but on Land Purchase that the difficulty began. By the middle of March it was known that Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Trevelyan, and Mr. Heneage differed from their colleagues on the Land Question, and Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan as members of the Cabinet put their views before Mr. Gladstone in writing. The time for bringing forward the Ministerial measures was postponed from the 22nd of March to the 8th of April. On the 29th of March it was announced that Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan had resigned, and that Mr. Stansfeld had returned to his old post at the head of the Local Government Board, which he had himself established under Mr. Gladstone's first Administration. Lord Dalhousie, without a seat in the Cabinet, took Mr. Trevelyan's place as Secretary for Scotland. On the same day Mr. Gladstone announced in the House of Commons that on the 8th of April he would ask for leave to bring in a Bill "to amend the provision for the future government of Ireland;" and that on the 15th he would ask leave to bring in a measure "to make amended provision for the Sale and Purchase of Land in Ireland." No public statement as to the reasons for the resignation of two members of the Cabinet could yet be made, but it was generally known that it was not only on the Land Purchase Bill, but on some points in the Home Rule Bill that there was divergence of opinion now.

While these controversies were going on the new Parliament was perplexing old authority with fear of change. It consented with obvious reluctance to the coercion of Greece, though it was to the best interests of the Hellenic Kingdom that it should be prevented from making war against its hereditary enemy who was still too strong for it.



There were protests against charging the cost of the military operations in Burmah on the Indian revenue. The temper of the Liberal majority was shewn in the enthusiasm Mr. Chamberlain evoked by a prompt reply to an insolent question. Lord Grimston gave notice that he would on the next day ask Mr. Chamberlain whether he still adhered to the words attributed to him—"I ask what ransom will property pay for the security it enjoys—what substitute will it find for the natural rights which have ceased to be recognized. Society is banded together in order to protect itself against the instincts of those of its members who would make very short work of private ownership if left alone." As soon as the notice was given Mr. Chamberlain sprang to his feet and said, amid loud cheering and laughter, "In order to save the time of the House I beg to say that the extracts now read are perfectly correct, and I adhere to them." A beginning was made in dealing with Employers' Liability, with Copyhold Enfranchisement and with Coal Mines Regulation in a popular sense. When, on the 5th of March, Mr. Labouchere brought forward his motion against Hereditary Legislators 166 members voted for it, and 202 against; and when the numbers were announced by the tellers, some Member exclaimed, "The handwriting on the wall!" Mr. Dillwyn's motion in favour of Disestablishing the Church of England in Wales led to a remarkable debate and a significant division. Mr. Gladstone was in bed with a feverish cold, and Sir William Harcourt, speaking for his colleagues, opposed the motion on the ground that abstract resolutions which are not to be followed by early and definite action could not be adopted by the Government. Sir William Harcourt, however, admitted that Mr. Dillwyn and Mr. Richard (who seconded the motion) had made out a case which was hardly disputed on the other side of the House. Mr. Albert Grey moved a resolution in favour of Church Reform, which in a division was preferred to that of Mr. Dillwyn by 241 to 229; but being put as a substantive motion was rejected by 346 to 49.



In Committee of Supply Mr. Labouchere carried an amendment by which the cost of keeping up the London Parks was transferred from the Imperial Treasury to the local rates; on the 16th of March Mr. Stansfeld's motion against the Contagious Diseases Acts was carried without a division; and the Bill based upon it was afterwards passed through all its stages with the same general consent. Mr. Carvell Williams effected a complete revolution in one of our social customs by carrying a Bill for extending the hours during which Marriages may be lawfully solemnized. The change of the limit from twelve to three, at once made weddings afternoon instead of morning ceremonies, and abolished wedding breakfasts. The limit of three o'clock is a compromise with ancient prejudice, but it is a step towards assimilating our marriage customs with those of other lands. The Crofters Act, introduced by Mr. Trevelyan and carried, gave the Highland peasants fixity of tenure and fair rents, to be settled by Commissioners empowered to reduce or remit arrears. A question which had stood over from Lord Beaconsfield's days was settled by the passing of the Medical Acts Amendment Bill, and Mr. Bryce's Act on International and Colonial Copyright, the Shop Hours Regulation Bill, and a Bill for stopping the sale of Intoxicating Liquors to young children were among the fifty-nine Acts of this short and busy Parliament. In a Bill to regulate the expenses of Returning Officers at elections the House of Commons inserted a clause charging the official cost of the election on the rates; but the House of Lords refused to pass the Bill with this addition, and the Commons yielded. There was an interesting debate on a motion by Dr. Cameron declaring that the Church of Scotland ought to be disestablished and disendowed. Mr. Gladstone opposed the resolution on the ground that in the late election the question had been distinctly kept out of the programme of the Scottish Liberals, and it was the opinion of Scotland which should determine the question. The division showed that Scot-

land had not yet expressed its mind. The motion was defeated by 237 against 125 ; and of the Scotch Members 28 Liberals were absent, 27 Liberals voted with Dr. Cameron, and 7 Liberals and 10 Conservatives voted against him.

The Bill for legalizing Marriages between widowers and the sisters of their deceased wives was passed by the Commons and once more thrown out in the Lords. A measure for the closing of Public Houses on Sunday in the county of Durham was rejected on the third reading by the Peers after the representative House had sanctioned it. On the other hand the Lords passed a resolution in favour of opening Museums on Sundays. Dr. Foster's Allotments and Small Holdings Bill was talked out on the 31st of March. Mr. Mundella's Railway and Canal Traffic Bill—which prepared the way for the measure afterwards passed—was read a second time, but had to be withdrawn. The Lord Chancellor's Lunacy Bill and his County Courts Bill were both sacrificed to the need for rapidly winding up the business of the year. Mr. Courtney's Women Suffrage Bill was read a second time, but it got no further. A Bill providing compensation for the sufferers by the riot on the 8th of February was passed. The riots at Belfast led to the general acceptance of Mr. John Morley's proposal to renew the Irish Peace Preservation Act "for a further limited period."

Two eminent men disappeared from the House of Commons during the Session. On the 5th of April Mr. W. E. Forster died after a long illness. He had been elected for the new Central Division of his old Bradford constituency in the 1885 election, but had never taken his seat in the new Parliament. He was not an old man, being only in his sixty-eighth year, but he had worn himself out in the public service. He will always be remembered for the two great Acts he piloted through the House of Commons, one of which is for ever associated with his name. He had been Under-Secretary for the Colonies in

Lord Russell's brief Administration in the eight months from October 1865 to June 1866. After the Liberal victories in 1868 he was marked out for higher service, and was made a Privy Councillor and Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education. In 1870 he was admitted to the Cabinet and introduced and passed the Elementary Education Bill, which was the chief Government measure of the year. Two years later he was equally successful with the Ballot Bill, and afterwards, in 1873, passed a Bill amending the Education Act. When Mr. Gladstone temporarily retired from the leadership in 1875, Mr. Forster was spoken of as his successor, but withdrew his candidature as he was not acceptable to a considerable section of the party. He had, in fact, by some mistakes of management, or by lack of a conciliatory temper, annoyed and alienated the Nonconformists, whose indifference did much to bring about the defeat of the Liberals in 1874.\* In the Liberal Administration of 1880, Mr. Gladstone induced him to accept the post—then a very arduous one—of Chief Secretary for Ireland. He entered on his work with the noble intention of doing something to alleviate the ills of Ireland. He was frustrated, however, in his first remedial scheme. Ireland was convulsed by cruel evictions of which more than a thousand had taken place in the first half of the year. Mr. Forster said these evictions must be stopped. He introduced a Bill giving the tenants Compensation for Disturbance, and told the House of Commons he could not answer for the good order of Ireland during the coming winter if that Bill was not passed. But there were Dissident Liberals even among the majority in the Parliament of 1880, and their hesitancy or antagonism reduced the numbers by which the Bill was passed in its later stages and so encouraged the House of Lords to throw it out. The confusion and disorder which Mr. Forster feared followed on and flowed from this disaster,

\* See "England under Lord Beaconsfield," pages 26, 27 and 119, octavo edition, pages 17, 18 and 77, popular edition.

and Mr. Forster was driven back on the old methods of repression. In this policy he met with strong opposition from many Liberals—Mr. Chamberlain among them—who thought that the time for repressive measures was over. He was defeated in the Cabinet and resigned; and it was only known in after days that in the concluding portion of his Irish Administration he had wonderfully escaped assassination. When his death was announced in the House of Commons Mr. Gladstone spoke in high terms of his worth as a man and his honesty as a statesman, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach added a few words of hearty appreciation and sympathy. English politicians drop all their quarrels at the grave.

The other loss was that of Sir Thomas May, who resigned the office of Clerk of the House which he had held for fifteen years, after sitting at the table as Clerk Assistant for fifteen years. He had been in the service of the House for fifty-four years. Sir Thomas Erskine May was the chief authority on matters of Parliamentary procedure. His book on the Privileges, Customs, and Usages of Parliament was published in 1844, and is still the chief authority on those subjects in all the legislatures which have sprung from that at Westminster. In announcing his retirement, the Speaker, in well-chosen words, expressed his sense of the great services Sir Thomas May had rendered to the House, to previous Speakers, and to himself. On the next day Mr. Gladstone moved a vote of thanks to Sir Thomas May, which was seconded by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and supported by Mr. Parnell and carried unanimously. He was afterwards raised to the peerage under the title of Lord Farnborough, but died on the 17th of May, without having taken his seat in the House of Lords.



## CHAPTER III.

*THE HOME RULE BILL.*

THE signs of a great constitutional and political crisis became more and more apparent as the day for the exposition of the Home Rule Bill approached. On the morning of Thursday the 8th of April, the House of Commons was opened at six o'clock—four hours earlier than usual—and breakfast was ready at half-past eight, with a bill of fare specially printed for the occasion. Members crowded in and by nine o'clock in the morning every seat in the chamber contained the hat of a member, put there to secure the place. The rush for seats in the galleries open to the public led to a suggestion, which the Speaker refused to accept, that members should be allowed to place their friends in the ventilation chamber under the grated floor of the House, where the voices of speakers are distinctly audible. As the hour of meeting drew near crowds assembled in Parliament Street, and in the square opposite Palace Yard, and extended the whole distance from Mr. Gladstone's official residence in Downing Street to the corner of the Abbey. A bitter wind blew and a cold April shower came down, but the crowds waited under their umbrellas. Just before half-past four Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone came out, took their seats in a victoria, and drove through cheering crowds—though with some hostile murmurs—to the House. The short drive along Whitehall and Parliament Street was like a royal progress, and if the enthusiasm of the great bulk of the populace could promise triumph it seemed abundantly secured. At the members'

entrance the welcome was equally warm ; and in the House it was without example in its enthusiasm. When Mr. Gladstone appeared from behind the Speaker's chair, the Liberals and the Irish members rose to their feet and cheered, and waved their hats for several minutes. Mr. Gladstone acknowledged his unparalleled reception by a bow and a smile, and took his seat between Sir William Harcourt and Mr. John Morley. Never had the new Houses of Parliament worn such an aspect as the crowded chamber presented at this critical moment. Chairs had been placed over the floor of the House, from the cross-benches up to the gangway, and every seat was full. The Speaker's gallery and the strangers' gallery were crowded to the ceiling ; at the other end of the House the reporters' gallery and the seats behind it were densely packed. The galleries along the sides of the House were filled with members, and in the place devoted to the peers, the Duke of Cambridge and Prince Christian occupied the places over the clock, where they were joined by the Prince of Wales and Prince Albert Victor. On the diplomatic bench sat the American Minister, the Greek Minister, and the French Ambassador, and crowding the entrance to the Peers' gallery was a group of men every one of whom bore an historic name. In the few seats for strangers under the gallery, Mr. Schnadhorst and Cardinal Manning sat side by side. At the bar the House was equally crowded. The gangways were full of members sitting on the steps, Mr. Arch on one side confronting Lord Cranborne on the other. Even the steps of the chair were covered ; and there was a dense crowd at the bar.

The Speaker took the chair at four o'clock. There was no private business. On the front line of chairs sat Sir Robert Fowler, smiling and self-important. As soon as the Speaker appeared he rose to present a petition from a City meeting, signed by the Lord Mayor as Chairman, asking the House not to sanction any Bill for creating a separate legislature for Ireland. Major Saunderson followed with a group

of petitions from the North of Ireland, and for the next five minutes a shower of such petitions descended on the House. Then followed the usual crop of waste paper, gathered into the all-receiving bag. Mr. Samuel Smith, Mr. Hoare, and Mr. Caine, making their way to the table with some difficulty, took their seats ; and then there was a pause till Mr. Gladstone came. Questions were postponed by common consent, and Mr. Gladstone rose, but merely to move that the motion respecting the government of Ireland should have precedence over the Orders of the Day. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach asked that the debate should be continued to-morrow and onwards if needful without interruption, to which Mr. Gladstone consented at once. Lord Claud Hamilton's vanity could not resist the opportunity of self-advertisement, and he asked from the gallery something about the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill. The House laughed ; Mr. Mundella made a brief reply. The motion to give Mr. Gladstone precedence was put and carried, and then Mr. Gladstone rose, and the cheers which had greeted his entrance broke out again. Never had the great orator been in better condition for a speech. His voice rang clear through the crowded silence, and everybody was impressed with the importance of the occasion and the solemn dignity of the scene. The venerable age of the speaker, nearly half-way through his seventy-seventh year, the vast audience within the House itself, the innumerable multitudes all round the world who were waiting for his words, and the immense significance of the measure he was about to propose gave an historic significance to the scene which every person present felt. Mr. Gladstone spoke for three hours and twenty-five minutes and was listened to with careful and respectful attention, broken now by friendly now by hostile cheers. As he proceeded the hostile demonstrations died away and heavy silence sat on the Tory ranks, while the sympathetic responses grew in frequency. The profound earnestness of the orator, the moving tones of a voice that changed with every mood—the scorn of mean

intrigue, the pity for undeserved suffering, the sympathy for a nation ever struggling in vain in the grip of a stronger people—stirred the better feelings of his audience and compelled their acquiescence in his purpose. As Mr. Trevelyan said, speaking an hour later, the speech was so full of matter, so grand in words, and, still more, so remarkable in energy and diction that it actually benumbed the faculties—meaning the critical faculties—of those who heard it. When Mr. Gladstone sat down, after a magnificent peroration, the House broke into cheering loud and long, in which many who had gone with him in feeling but not in conviction were compelled to join. And as the vast audience crowded away to dinner, it was with the belief that they had just listened to the crowning effort of a great orator's and great statesman's life.

Mr. Gladstone began by saying that the two questions of Irish land and Irish government were closely and inseparably connected, but that they must, from the vastness of the task of exposition, be taken separately. He wished that we should no more fence and skirmish with the Irish question, but come to close quarters with it. The time had arrived when it was the duty of Parliament to come to some decisive resolution, and his intention was to propose that which, if happily accepted, would liberate Parliament from the restraints under which of late years it had ineffectually struggled to perform the business of the country, would restore legislation to its natural, ancient, unimpeded course, and, above all, would obtain a clear and decisive answer to the question whether it is possible to establish good and harmonious relations between Great Britain and Ireland on the footing of those institutions to which Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen are unalterably attached. We were imperatively called upon to deal with the great subject of social order in Ireland, and must not be led into exaggeration. Crime—agrarian crime—in Ireland was not what it had been. Exceptional legislation to meet it had become habitual. It was like an endeavour to live on medicine,



but nations no more than individuals could find subsistence in what was meant to be a cure. But was coercion a cure? Agrarian crime had become as habitual in Ireland as the legislation intended to suppress it. As to further coercive measures the late Government had in the previous July dropped the Crimes Act, a decision which could never be effaced. Irresolute coercion had failed: would resolute coercion be more successful? Could it succeed in the light of day, and could it be administered by the people of England and Scotland against the people of Ireland?—"by the two nations which, above all others upon earth—I need hardly except America—best understand, and are most fondly attached to, the essential principles of liberty." The people would never resort to that alternative till they had tried every other. Had they tried every other? "Well, some we have tried, to which I will refer, but we have not tried every alternative, because there is one—not unknown to human experience—widely known to various countries in the world where this dark and difficult problem has been solved by the comparatively natural and simple, though not always easy expedient, of stripping law of its foreign garb, and investing it with a domestic character." Ireland, unlike England and Scotland, had never made her own laws. The question now before us was how to reconcile Imperial unity with diversity of legislation. Mr. Grattan had said, "I demand the continued severance of the Parliaments with a view to the continued and everlasting unity of the Empire." Was that a mere flight of rhetoric? No; it was a problem other countries had solved in circumstances more difficult than ours. We had solved it ourselves, for out of six centuries Ireland had for five of them a separate Parliament. Did that separate Parliament destroy the unity of the British Empire? Other countries had found that local autonomy did not sacrifice but confirmed Imperial unity. It was so in Sweden and Norway, in Austria and Hungary. What he was about to propose then was not a repeal of the Union, but "the establishment, by the authority of Parlia-

ment, of a legislative body sitting in Dublin for the conduct both of legislation and administration, under the conditions which may be described by the Act defining Irish as distinct from Imperial affairs."

Mr. Gladstone then proceeded to lay down the essential conditions of any plan Parliament could even be asked to entertain. These were, that the unity of the Empire must not be placed in jeopardy; the minority must be protected; the political equality of the three countries must be maintained, and there must be an equitable distribution of Imperial burdens. He then discussed some proposals which had been made for the special treatment of Ulster—its exclusion from the Bill, its separate autonomy or the reservation of certain matters, such as education, for Provincial Councils; all of which he rejected. The establishment of an Irish legislature involved the removal of Irish peers from the House of Lords and the Irish representatives from the House of Commons. But if Ireland was not represented at Westminster, how was it to be taxed? The English people would never force on Ireland taxation without representation. The taxing power would be in the hands of the Irish legislature, but Customs and Excise duties connected with Customs would be solely in the control of the Imperial Parliament, Ireland's share in these being reserved for Ireland's use. Ireland must have security against her Magna Charta being tampered with; the provisions of the Act would therefore only be capable of modification with the concurrence of the Irish legislature, or after the recall of the Irish members to the two Houses of Parliament. The Irish legislature would have all the powers which were not specially reserved from it in the Act. It was to consist of two orders, though not two Houses. It would be subject to all the prerogatives of the Crown; it would have nothing to do with Army or Navy, or with Foreign or Colonial relations; nor could it modify the Act on which its own authority was based. Contracts, charters, questions of education, religious endow-

ments and establishments, would be beyond its authority. Trade and navigation, coinage, currency, weights and measures, copyright, census, quarantine laws, and some other matters were not to be within the powers of the Irish Parliament. The composition of the legislature was to be first, the 103 members now representing Ireland, with 101 elected by the same constituencies, with the exception of the University, with power to the Irish legislature to give two members to the Royal University if it chose; then the present Irish members of the House of Lords, with 75 elected by the Irish people under a property qualification. The Viceroyalty was to be left, but the Viceroy was not to quit office with an outgoing government, and no religious disability was to affect his appointment. He would have a Privy Council, and the executive would remain as at present, but might be changed by the action of the legislative body. The present judges would preserve their lien on the Consolidated Fund of Great Britain, and the Queen would be empowered to antedate their pensions if it was seen to be desirable. Future judges, with the exception of two in the Court of Exchequer, would be appointed by the Irish government, and, like English judges, would hold their office during good behaviour. The Constabulary would remain under its present administration, Great Britain paying all charges over a million. Eventually, however, the whole police of Ireland would be under the Irish government. The civil servants would have two years' grace, with a choice of retirement on pension before passing under the Irish executive.

Of the financial arrangements Mr. Gladstone spoke in careful and minute detail. He fixed the proportion of Imperial charges Ireland should pay at one-fifteenth, or in other words she would pay one part and Great Britain fourteen parts. More than a million of duty is paid on spirits in Ireland which come to Great Britain, and this would be practically a contribution towards the Irish revenue. So with Irish porter and with the tobacco manufactured in



Ireland and sold here. Altogether the British taxpayers would contribute in this way £1,400,000 a year to the Irish Exchequer ; reducing the actual payment of Ireland itself for Imperial affairs to one-twenty-sixth. The Irish budget would therefore be, one-fifteenth of the annual charge for debt, £1,466,000 ; Army and Navy, £1,666,000 ; Civil charges, £110,000 ; total, £3,242,000. To meet this the Customs produced £1,880,000 ; Excise, £4,300,000 ; Stamps, £600,000 ; Income Tax, £550,000 ; and non-tax revenue, including the Post Office, £1,020,000, total, £8,350,000. The local expenditure would be £1,000,000 for the Constabulary, £2,510,000 for other Civil charges, and £834,000 cost of collection of the revenue. Adding £750,000 a year for Sinking Fund, the total outlay would be £7,936,000, leaving a surplus of £414,000 ; but great economies would probably be effected by a responsible Irish Government.

Having thus completed his statement of the provisions of the measure, Mr. Gladstone turned to sum up the results. "We stand face to face," he said, "with what is termed Irish nationality." Was this an evil ? He did not think so. "I hold," he said, "that there is such a thing as local patriotism, which is not bad but good." It existed in England, in Scotland, it existed no less in Ireland. Having paid a high tribute to the gallantry of Irish soldiers, Mr. Gladstone concluded by saying, "Our choice has been made. It has not been made without thought and care. It has been made in the full knowledge that trial and difficulty may confront us upon our path. It may be I have no right to say that Ireland, through her constitutionally chosen representatives, will accept the plan we offer her. I hope it ; I do not know it ; I have no title to assume it. If Ireland does not cheerfully accept it, it is impossible for us to attempt to force upon her what is intended as a boon, nor can we possibly press England and Scotland to accord to her what she does not heartily welcome and embrace. There may be difficulties, but, Sir, I rely upon the patriotism



and sagacity of this House ; I rely upon the effect of free and full discussion ; I rely, more than all, upon the just and generous sentiments of the two British nations ; and, looking forward, I ask the House to assist us in the work that we have undertaken, to believe that no trivial motives would have driven us on ; to assist us in this work which we believe will restore Parliament to its dignity and legislation to its free and unimpeded course. I ask them to stay that waste of the public treasure, under the present system of government and administration in Ireland, which is not a waste only, but which demoralizes while it exhausts. I ask them to show to Europe and to America that we too can face the political problems which America twenty years ago, and which many countries in Europe, have been called upon to face and have not feared to deal with. I ask that we should practise—as we very often preach—in our own case, with firm and fearless hand, the doctrine that we have so often inculcated upon others, namely, that the concession of local self-government is not the way to sap or to impair, but the way to strengthen and to consolidate unity. I ask that we should learn to rely less on merely written stipulations, and more upon those better stipulations which are written on the heart and on the mind of man. I ask that we should apply to Ireland the happy experience which we have gained in England and Scotland, where a course of generations has now taught us, not as dream or theory but as practice and as life, that the best and surest foundation we can find to build on is the foundation afforded by the affections, the convictions and the will of men ; and it is thus, by the decree of the Almighty, that, far more than by any other endeavour, we may be able to secure at once social peace, and the fame, the power and the permanence of the Empire.”

The silence imposed by etiquette on the seceding members of the Cabinet could now be broken, and the explanations given by Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Chamberlain formed the chief interest of the debate. Mr. Trevelyan

spoke after dinner, expressing the extreme compunction and regret he felt in leaving the Government, which he had joined in the full expectation that if a Home Rule Bill was resolved on he and those who agreed with him would "knock the measure about in the Cabinet, as Cabinets do, and mould it into accord with what had been our relative opinions, and what are mine now. But I was disappointed in my expectation," he added, "and that is why I stand here to-night. I do not know whether I chose the better part." His own plan was to give to freely elected Irish local bodies the control of education, of the poor law, the superintendence of local government and the development of the resources of Ireland. These bodies should have, too, all the powers of the Imperial Parliament or the Lord Lieutenant, over railway, tramway, and harbour Bills, should have a fair share of the produce of the taxes, with full control of local taxation and local administration, but with no legislative powers. Mr. Parnell followed with some criticisms on details of Mr. Gladstone's scheme, which with some amendments in Committee "will be cheerfully accepted by the Irish people and their representatives as a solution of the long-standing dispute between the two countries and will lead to the prosperity and peace of Ireland and the satisfaction of England."

On the next night, the ninth of April, Mr. Chamberlain opened the debate. No act of his public life, he said, had been so painful as the resignation of his place in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet. "I am told that by taking that step I have wrecked my political prospects and destroyed altogether all hope of future usefulness. That is a prospect which it is possible for me to contemplate with equanimity, but it is more difficult to reconcile myself to a separation from one whom I have followed and honoured for so many years, and to leave the personal friends and political associates with whom, I believe, I have no other cause of difference whatever." After reading a letter to Mr. Gladstone, in which he accepted the offer of a seat in the Cabinet,

although he was opposed to the establishment of a legislature in Dublin, Mr. Chamberlain said, "I have never been opposed to Home Rule, as I have explained and as I have understood the words, and as my right honourable friend has on many public occasions defined it." That definition which he had accepted was "to give to Ireland the largest possible extension of local government consistent with the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of Parliament." Mr. Gladstone had further "always declared that he would not offer to Ireland anything in the direction of Home Rule which he was not prepared to offer with an equal hand to Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom." The present measure was not consistent with these views. Moreover it was associated with a Land Bill which involved the issue of £120,000,000 in Consols. Mr. Chamberlain was not permitted to explain his opposition to a measure which had not been introduced, and he therefore confined himself to his objections to the Home Rule Bill. These were fourfold: first, the exclusion of the Irish members from the Imperial Parliament; second, the giving up of the power of taxing Ireland; third, the surrender of the appointment of judges and magistrates; and fourth, the plan of making the new authority supreme in all matters not specially reserved from it, instead of giving it only the authority specially delegated by the Act. One of these four, the collection of Customs by the local instead of by Imperial authority, had been modified, but the other three remained. He would prefer to wipe off the obligations which existed between England and Ireland as a bad debt, and that Ireland should go free altogether, "so that we might be free from the enormous responsibility which I believe a sham union would certainly entail. I think the scheme will come to that in the end, and I would rather face it at once." His own idea of national councils was now out of date, and he looked for the solution in the system of Federation. It was only a very large proposal which could at any



future time be accepted as a solution of this vast question. Lord Hartington, who spoke somewhat later, began with a severe criticism of Mr. Gladstone's plans. After vindicating his own consistency in holding aloof from a Liberal Ministry, he contended that though "the mandate of the constituencies is as unknown to our Constitution as the distinction between fundamental laws and laws of inferior sanction," still, had Home Rule been before the constituencies in the late election it might have led to the return of a Tory majority. There was an alternative course to the creation of an Irish Parliament in a large scheme of local self-government. Such a concession would no doubt create difficulties ; but, said Lord Hartington, "I admit that if these Kingdoms are to be made a United Kingdom, the people of this country will never tolerate any marked inequality or real inequality between the institutions of the three Kingdoms, and they will demand that, perhaps not identical but practical equality of institutions shall be conceded to Ireland." He did not desire to express any opinion as to the ultimate result of a reform of local self-government in any of the three Kingdoms. "It is quite possible when the task is taken in hand that it may be found that the desire which is felt by the people of the three Kingdoms, and the necessities of the case are not limited merely to the creation of county boards or Municipal councils, but that some larger provincial—perhaps even national—organization and co-ordination of local authorities may be required in England, Scotland, Ireland, and in Wales." Discussing the foreign precedents which Mr. Gladstone had mentioned, Lord Hartington contended that they did not apply. If we gave a domestic legislature to Ireland, and Scotland and Wales demanded domestic legislatures, the demand could not be refused. The domestic legislature of England, in which Scotland, Ireland, and Wales were not represented, would then have control of Imperial affairs. "Would Scotchmen like to be excluded from all control over foreign and colonial affairs



whatever? I say they would repudiate it." Lord Hartington concluded by pointing out what he thought to be the dangers of collision the Bill involved, by declaring that the question of Irish order had been too much subordinated to other interests, and by expressing the belief that the people would now demand that politicians should sink their differences "and unite as one man to hand down to our successors this great Empire, compact and complete as we received it from our forefathers, and at the same time to maintain through its length and breadth the undisputed supremacy of the law." Mr. John Morley followed, replying in detail to the vague alarms the three Liberal opponents of the Bill had raised. It was painful to have to vindicate his position against his oldest colleagues in political arms. But the occasion had come. This was a crisis in which private considerations must yield, and with whatever pain, we must each and all take up the positions our consciences commend to us. "The problem of how to build up social order in Ireland is so complex and so entangled," said Mr. Morley, "that it would tax the highest powers of the ablest men in all quarters of the House to insure a solution of it." It was time we put aside recrimination. "For the purposes of this great constitutional debate let us pass a great amnesty." Proceeding to set forth the difficulties and dangers of the task, he urged the opponents of concession to have the courage of their opinions and declare that Ireland was not fit for self-government nor ripe for representative institutions. The alternative to the Home Rule scheme was severe repression. The suppression of the National League would mean the passing of a Coercion Act which would give the Executive authority in Ireland the power to put down meetings, and to suppress newspapers, to enter houses when the police thought it necessary on the chance of finding illegal meetings, and even the locking up of a good many priests and a bishop or two. If this Bill was rejected they would be face to face with "a lawless cessation of the payment of rent. Our policy

towards Ireland had gone from vacillation to vacillation. Perhaps Mr. Goschen might tell the House how to escape from the miserable chaos of alternative hesitancies and precipitancies in which they were constantly finding themselves. As to the exclusion of the Irish members from the House of Commons, those who were most against an Irish legislature were for keeping a body of Irish gentlemen here in a constant state of irritation against us, and a source of mischief, dissension and inefficiency."

On the third night the debate was resumed by Lord Randolph Churchill in a characteristic speech. Sir Charles Russell, who replied, traced the history of the Union, sketched the repressive policy which had been adopted and carried out ever since, and defended Mr. Gladstone's scheme. On the question of the exclusion of the Irish members, Sir Charles Russell said: "For my part I should be sorry to see—if any one can suggest a practicable method of avoiding it—Irish members cease their attendance in this House." If such a scheme could be pointed out he should hope the Ministers of the day would be open to consider the point. After tracing the evils of the present system he contended that the question was no longer whether Home Rule should be given, but whether it should be given now, and in what form. If passed now in a generous spirit it would be received by Ireland in a spirit of thorough friendliness and would be the means of ending a state of things which was intolerable to Ireland, intolerable to England, and injurious to the name and fame and greatness of the Empire. Mr. Burt followed with a powerful appeal on the same side, and after a fiery speech against the Bill from Major Saunderson, Mr. Whitbread gave it the support of his high authority and his calm and sober judgment. We had come to the parting of the ways, and he went with his colleagues. He had taken a part in extending the suffrage to Ireland, and in securing that the votes of the Irish people should be given independently, without fear and without influence. Now that the verdict

of that country had been given, should he desert the principles on which he had acted? "After having put the question to the Irish people, and having found that they have answered in one direction by an overwhelming majority, I prefer," said Mr. Whitbread, "to listen to that voice and to do what I can to satisfy it." Mr. Gibson wound up the debate for that night, and it was reopened on Tuesday the 13th of April by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sir William Harcourt, in the most brilliant debating speech the discussion had produced, enlivened the debate by what Mr. Goschen, who followed him, called "most pleasant banter." The banter, however, was an essential part of an argument by which the mutually destructive pleas of the opponents of the Bill were placed in their true relation to each other. If the Government Bill was condemned, what was to take its place? Mr. Trevelyan was for local bodies with large powers; but Lord Hartington was against this proposal, and it was a child whom Mr. Chamberlain had discarded. Mr. Chamberlain would stay evictions by Act of Parliament, and lend the landlords such a proportion of their rents as would save them from privation, while a Commission sat to solve the Land Question. Mr. Chamberlain's estimate was that this would cost £4,000,000 for six months—"if I were an Irish landlord and were on that Commission, and if there were an Act of Parliament taking money from the English Exchequer at the rate of £4,000,000 in six months to pay me my rent, I should take every opportunity for prolonging their negotiations."

Lord Hartington had said that "if the law—that is the Crimes Act, 'instead of terminating as it did at the close of last Session, had been a permanent Act,'—mark the 'if,' 'to be maintained as long as the necessity continued, and if at the same time the change of Government last year had not occurred, the Prime Minister would not have declared that the future government of Ireland on the same lines as in the past was impossible.' It has been said that there is



great virtue in an 'if'—but history is full of such morals. If many things had not happened, things would not be as they are. I remember an old nursery jingle in my childhood—

If 'ifs' and 'ands' were pots and pans,  
There'd be no need for tinkers' hands.

Oh! but there are a great many tinkers, and before you have got rid of those 'ifs' there will be a great many more." Reviewing the course taken by the late Government which had made Home Rule inevitable, and the entire change of attitude of the Conservative party that led up to Lord Carnarvon's resignation, he asked what was the policy of the benches opposite. Was it the suppression of the National League? Lord Hartington might perhaps consent to that, but would Mr. Chamberlain? "Is he ready to accept the measures which will be necessary for that purpose?" "The more you look at all these alternatives and the more you examine them, the more certain, in my opinion, one becomes, that there is no alternative—none that has yet been suggested—to the plan of the Government, except the coercion of Ireland." Coercion, no doubt, was a policy. But it needed a strong government to carry it out, and a strong government was not made by the breaking up of parties. Lord Hartington had spoken of a truce to party organization—the dream of some good men and some bad men. Lord Chatham tried it; and Sir W. Harcourt quoted and enlarged upon Burke's brilliant description of the Coalition government in his tract on "The Present Discontents." After a brilliant description of "the Seven against Ireland," Sir W. Harcourt said, "No, Sir, I cannot join the noble lord in his dreams of the millennium in which the calf and the young lion and the fatling will lie down together with a little child—perhaps from Paddington—to lead them. There has been a great deal made of these aristocratic secessions. For one, I am sorry for them. I think that they are a bad thing for the country, and especially for the aristocracy, for of this we



may be sure, that if the aristocracy of England is going to range itself with the party of ascendancy in Ireland, the democracy of England will side with the Irish people." If you want a policy of coercion you need the statesmanship of a Cromwell or a Strafford to carry it out. Such a policy might even be popular for a time, as the war against the American colonies once was, but the people became sick of it at last. Could Mr. Chamberlain or Mr. Rylands promise and vow on behalf of the Radical party that they would never become sick of coercion? They might slay this Bill, but its ghost would ever be present at their festivals of coercion. He could not for himself accept the responsibility of now entering on a policy of force which he believed would fail. "It is for that reason that I have stood, and that I still stand, by the great enterprise of my right honourable friend."

Mr. Goschen followed in the most impassioned speech he had ever addressed to the House of Commons. The solemn tones of his deep thick voice, his energetic gesticulation, his alarmed and denunciatory manner and the strong expression of his feelings in the movements of his face, gave him the aspect of some ancient prophet, in a modern dress, foretelling the doom of Babylon. His evident earnestness gave effect to the alarm of which the speech was full. They were not to be frightened into acceptance of the Bill by the fact that 85 members from Ireland demanded it, or by threats as to the consequences of rejecting it. The Irish difficulty was agrarian as well as national—social even more than political; but this measure treated it solely in its political and national aspects. The Irish people wished to have laws which totally differed from those of most of the countries of Europe; they held views on property and on contracts which had not been accepted in other countries. The analogies of other countries as to the success of Home Rule were delusive and the argument from our own colonies did not apply because there was no agrarian difficulty there. The logical result of giving

Ireland a national Parliament would be the giving England and Scotland national Parliaments too. The proposed constitution of the Irish Parliament was defective. A second order based on rental could not in these days long resist the stress of Time. Then as to the veto of the Imperial Parliament nothing was known. It was a gigantic revolution they were attempting. Could we be sure that the new Irish Executive would not have a very difficult task to prevent conspirators, dynamiters, and Nihilists—who had contributed to the funds for what they called the emancipation of Ireland—from flocking into Ireland? In the financial arrangements he saw openings for “intolerable dissension.” As to Ulster, he had never heard anything more monstrous than the statement that its inclusion in the Bill was an open question. The proposed Irish government would not have money or credit to undertake the material development of the country. On the question of education, were the Liberals prepared to hand over the Irish schools to the Roman Catholic bishops? Yet the Bill could not be carried with a clause excluding education from the control of the Irish Parliament. He would build up in localities local and municipal bodies; in that direction and in the direction of the land much required to be done, and if education could be placed on a footing more satisfactory to the Irish people he would wish that also. It was time that the vacillation of which the Prime Minister had spoken should cease, and that there should be some belief that England sometimes pronounces a last word.

Mr. Arch supported the Bill on the ground that the working men of the counties wished that Ireland should be treated not with oppression and coercion but with justice. Mr. E. R. Russell, in a much applauded speech, said he went heart and soul for the measure. They all knew now that Home Rule must come. He was poignantly sensible of the irony of the situation when he saw Mr. Chamberlain lagging behind on this, which was the one question of the day. Mr. Chamberlain had not shown them with any force

or acceptance why he should desert his friends, and why, on this question, they were deprived of his assistance, with the concomitant result of cleavage, disorder, and disaster. Mr. E. Robertson made a lively speech on the same side, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach wound up the discussion on the anti-Ministerial side.

At midnight Mr. Gladstone rose to reply. Answering the taunt that the safeguards he had provided showed his own sense of the danger of Home Rule, he said they were inserted to meet the fears of others and not his own. He had laid down five essential conditions, "under which the granting of a domestic legislature to Ireland would be justifiable and wise: first, that it must be consistent with Imperial unity; secondly, that it must be founded on the political authority of the three nations; thirdly, that there must be an equitable adjustment of Imperial burdens; fourthly, that there should be safeguards for the minority; and fifthly, that it should be in the nature of a settlement and not of a mere provocation to the revival of fresh demands. I stated that these were the only conditions. I find I have been reported as having stated that the assumption of Customs and Excise by this country and the absence of Irish members from this House were likewise vital and essential conditions. I do not think I used those epithets. If I did, it was probably an inadvertence, for which I apologize, and unquestionably it was in entire contradiction to what I had stated before, in which I laid down the only essential conditions." What he had thought to be clear was that the 103 Irish members "could not possibly continue as now to come here and vote upon all matters, English, Scotch, Irish, and Imperial alike." It had been suggested that Irish members should come to the House of Commons with limited powers, but he had failed to discover means of drawing the line. Mr. Gladstone then went through the arguments which had been used against the Bill. They were based on want of faith in the people. In what other country except Ireland, Mr.



Goschen had asked, could a "no rent" manifesto have been produced? "My first observation upon it is this," said Mr. Gladstone, "in what country except Ireland can you show so lamentable, so deplorable a history—a history so disgraceful to those who had any hand in bringing about the whole relation between those who owned the land and those who occupied it. The speech of my right honourable friend appeared to proceed upon the assumption that there were ineradicable and incurable vices in Irishmen which placed them in a category different from the people of other nations, that they had a sort of double dose of Original Sin." As to the cases of Austria and Hungary, and Norway and Sweden, he had contended, not that the circumstances were exactly parallel, but that we are called on in this country to do, with infinitely greater advantages, what they had done in the face of infinitely greater difficulties. It was objected that the interests of this country were so closely interlaced with those of Ireland; was it likely, then, that Irishmen would overlook that interlacing? Was there no common sense among that portion of our countrymen? Mr. Gladstone then recalled the Tory hubbub that was raised when Mr. Thomas Drummond "shocked Conservatism from Land's End to John-o'-Groats by uttering the portentous doctrine that 'property has its duties as well as its rights.'" Lord Russell had said that the moral of all these objections, difficulties, and accusations was, that as England was peopled by Englishmen, and Scotland by Scotchmen, so Ireland was inhabited by Irishmen. On the argument from the refusal of the people of the United States to break up the Union, he said—"Having carried their point, what did they do? Having the Southern States at their feet, being in a position in which they were entitled to treat them as conquered countries, they invested every one of them with that full autonomy, a measure of which we are now asking for Ireland. I say, 'a measure of which autonomy,' because I believe that their autonomy is much fuller than that which we are now asking for Ireland."



After sketching in detail the contradictory objections to the Bill, which Sir William Harcourt had pointed out in his masterly statement, Mr. Gladstone said—“There is a decided want of common feature, common action, common purpose, common principle ; there is no united basis of action except the basis of hostility to this Bill. When I speak of this plan, I speak of it in its essence and not in its details. It may derive much advantage from the wisdom of Parliament. . . . Speaking of it as a plan I say it holds the field. It has many enemies ; it has not a single rival. . . . And, Sir, as the plan holds the field so, I say, the subject holds the field. Never, I think, have I witnessed such signs of public observation in this House and out of this House ; and, Sir, it is safe to prophesy that the subject will continue to hold the field.” Mr. Gladstone concluded a powerful peroration by saying—“We have come to the time for looking at the whole breadth of this subject, and endeavouring to compass it in our minds, when we must answer this question, whether we will make one bold attempt to free Parliament for its great and necessary work, and to establish harmony, by Irish laws for Ireland, or whether we will continue, on the other hand, to struggle on, as we have done before, living from hand to mouth, leaving England and Scotland to a famine of needful and useful legislation and Ireland to a continuance, never understated, of social disease that you do not know how to deal with, and which, in angry discord with Great Britain, you make no attempt to cure.”

Leave was then given to bring in the Bill, and it was read a first time without a division.

## CHAPTER IV.

*THE COALITION FORMING.*

THE great debate of which I have given a summary in the preceding chapter, contained the germ of the chief political movements of half a dozen succeeding years. It epitomized the whole Irish controversy and foreshadowed its consequences. Nearly all that was said and almost everything that was done in that and in the following Parliament with respect to the Irish question, arose out of the divergent tendencies which then, for the first time, showed themselves on the Parliamentary stage. The Liberal division had already become the chief political interest of the time, but its full extent had not yet revealed itself, and the Dissident Liberals had not actually coalesced with the Tory party. Lord Hartington, Sir Henry James, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Courtney, Sir John Lubbock and thirteen other Liberals had voted for the Tory Government in the division on Mr. Collings's motion which threw Lord Salisbury out of office, and it had been clear from that time that there was a section of the Liberal majority which could not be reckoned on for cordial support to Mr. Gladstone's Administration. But the further section of Dissident Liberals from his Irish policy who were represented by Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan, differed from their Liberal friends on the Irish question only, and it was, as yet, doubtful how far their opposition would carry them. They did not themselves know, and when the debate on the Irish Government Bill closed in the early hours of

Wednesday the 14th of April, it was still not unlikely that Mr. Chamberlain and his friends would support the second reading. Lord Hartington's section, however, were already pledged to a co-operation with the Tories which really amounted to an alliance. The first public act which showed that a coalition had been formed took place on the same evening (Wednesday the 14th of April) on the stage of Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket. A meeting was held by a body styling itself "The Loyal and Patriotic Union," and was so arranged as to exhibit to the world the interesting spectacle of a new political combination. Lord Cowper, a Liberal peer, was in the Chair. On his right hand sat Lord Hartington and on his left Lord Salisbury, each adorned with the riband of the Garter. Next to Lord Hartington was Mr. Peter Rylands, and next to him the Earl of Fife. On Lord Salisbury's left was Mr. Goschen, and left of Mr. Goschen was Mr. Plunket. Sir John Lubbock and Mr. W. H. Smith, Lord Edward Cavendish and Lord Cranbrook, were also conspicuous on the crowded stage. Before them was a vast audience of some four thousand people, with ladies and gentlemen in the boxes in evening dress. The Conservative leaders gave place to their new allies, and the first four speakers were Liberals. Lord Cowper began with an apologetic speech which was ill received, but which at once carried the meeting with it when he said that they had not destroyed Protestant ascendancy to put Catholic ascendancy in its place. Lord Hartington who proposed the first resolution began by a justification of his presence, which he said he should find in a few words uttered last night by the Prime Minister himself. The vast audience groaned at the mention of the Prime Minister and Lord Hartington drew himself up and said—"I hope that I may appeal to you not to make the task which I have before me more difficult than it is, by indulging in any want of respect to one whom I shall always admire and revere as the leader of a great party which in my opinion has conferred great advantages on the

country, and one who is at this moment in my judgment (cries of “Question”), although I am bound to differ from him, actuated by feelings as honourable and as honest as any that have ever inspired the conduct of an English statesman.” Mr. Gladstone had said that his Bill held the field. Were they then to stand aside? Lord Hartington then went over the familiar objections to the Bill, and moved a resolution, declaring that any proposals tending to invalidate the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland, would be disastrous to the interests of both countries. Mr. Peter Rylands seconded the motion, expressing the hope that “this delusive peace, this degrading capitulation, these terms of dishonour” would be condemned by the people and rejected by Parliament. Lord Fife supported the resolution as a Scotch Liberal and it was adopted. Then Lord Salisbury rose amid prolonged cheering, to give his blessing on a coalition in which men had put aside minor differences, and joined hands to defend that which was equally precious to all. “In doing so,” he said, “we renounce no past opinions, no future liberty. We have joined together for a great emergency, and by the requirements of that emergency our action is limited.” Mr. Goschen followed with a speech full of the new energy and passion which the Bill had created in him; and Mr. Plunket, Mr. W. H. Smith, and Mr. E. R. Wodehouse having spoken, Lord Cowper closed the proceedings by declaring that the gathering would always be looked back upon as a great historical meeting.

In the House of Commons there was a lull, and on Thursday evening the 15th of April Sir William Harcourt introduced his first budget. The times, as he said, were not propitious, and his predecessor, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, had said he did not envy him his task. The revenue had fallen short of the Estimate by £1,208,699, and the Expenditure had been less by £1,393,327. The deficit upon the year was £2,642,543. The Estimates for the twelve months then begun were for an Expenditure of



£90,428,599 and a Revenue of £89,885,000, leaving a deficit of £543,599. Taking £818,000 from the Sinking Funds, and remitting the duty on cottage brewing licenses for all houses under £8—a change which would relieve sixty thousand poor people at a loss to the revenue of only £16,000 a year,—he made the total outlay £89,610,229 and the total income £89,869,000, a surplus of £258,771. Sir William Harcourt correctly described it as “a common-sense budget.”

On the same day the Home Rule Bill was issued ; and on the next day, Friday the 16th, the Irish controversy was reopened in Parliament by the introduction of the Irish Land Bill. In a speech two hours and ten minutes in length, Mr. Gladstone sketched the historical conditions of Irish society which made it necessary “to ask the House of Commons to make a great effort, a considerable and serious effort, on behalf of the landlords of Ireland,” and then proceeded to expound the Bill. The end and aim of all the endeavours of the Ministry was not in the first place, and for its own sake, the contentment of the people of Ireland, but the social order of the country. Hence the Irish Government Bill and the Irish Land Bill were two parts of one scheme. This Bill assumed the establishment of an Irish legislative body. This Irish legislature was to appoint a person “of their own body” to be what the Bill called “a State Authority,” to be “the middle term instead of the Treasury between the vendor and the peasant occupier,” the medium through which the transaction was to take place. The object of the Bill was that all Irish owners of rented agricultural land should have the option or, in Mr. Gladstone’s words, “an opening towards the exercise of the option,” of being bought out by the State, the occupier to become the proprietor. The option was to belong to the immediate landlord alone, and no mortgagee would be able to acquire it, nor could the tenant set the machinery of purchase in motion. Tenants under £4 would be under no compulsion to take their holdings, and

in some congested districts the proprietorship would be transferred from the landlord to the State, which might, however, refuse to buy. The price was to be twenty years' purchase, but with certain powers to increase or to decrease it. The money was to be raised by the issue of fifty millions of New Three per Cents, ten millions for 1887-88, twenty for 1888-89, and another twenty for 1889-90—no application from a landlord being received after March 1890. The Imperial Government would appoint a Receiver-General "through whose hands all rents and all Irish revenues must pass before a shilling of them could be applied to any Irish purpose whatsoever." The position of the four parties to the transaction—the landlords, the tenants, the Irish State Authority and the British Exchequer—would be this. Take first the landlords. Take one with a gross rental of £1,200 a year, which with rates and cost of collection would be a net revenue of £960 a year. Twenty years' purchase would be £19,200. Then as to the tenant. He now paid £1,200; he would then pay £960, or four per cent. on twenty years' purchase on the gross rent. He would then be regarded as owner and would pay half rates. This four per cent. rent-charge would be payable for forty-nine years, at the end of which time the land would be his own, "without annual payment, unless taxation should be laid upon the land by the legislature of Ireland." Third—as to the position of the State Authority. It would receive the £960 from the tenant, but would pay to the Imperial Exchequer four per cent. on the net rental, or £768 a year; the collection of the rent-charge would cost it, say £19 4s.; the State Authority would therefore make a profit of £172 16s., out of which certain expenses, such as cost of conveyance, would have to be paid: the total result on transactions amounting to £20,000,000 would be a revenue to the Irish government of some £400,000 a year. The fourth party to the transactions, the British Exchequer, would receive four per cent. on its advance and a sinking fund. If that advance was twenty millions, there

would be two millions a year to get back. This would be got from the Receiver-General. He would take all the Irish revenue, say £10,850,000; and would first pay that two millions, with the other Imperial charges, altogether £6,242,000, to the British Exchequer, so that the Irish government could not touch any part of its income till the payments to the British Exchequer had been made.

The historic interest in this great measure is chiefly derived from the use made of it in the controversy of the moment. From first to last it was entirely misunderstood. It was brought forward as an integral part of the Home Rule scheme; and was only intended to come into operation side by side with it. It would not work, and it was not meant to work, apart from the establishment of a Legislature and a responsible Ministry in Ireland. The public, however, failed to see that the whole Irish revenue was pledged to the repayment of the money advanced, and regarded it as a scheme for the buying out of the Irish landlords at the cost of the British taxpayer. The attack on it was led by Mr. Chamberlain who opened the debate. He began by completing the explanation of his reasons for resigning, and reading the letter he had written to Mr. Gladstone in sending in his resignation. In this letter he objected to the unprecedented use of British credit, which would commit the British taxpayer to tremendous obligations accompanied by serious risk of loss. He objected, too, to the proposal to allow the Irish legislature to arrange its Customs tariff, to control the civil forces of the country, and to establish a volunteer army. This he regarded as tantamount to separation. But between the time at which the letter of resignation was written, and Mr. Gladstone's introduction of the Irish Government Bill great changes had been made. The Customs and Excise had been retained by the Imperial Parliament, there was the possibility of the retention of the Irish members at Westminster, "a matter of first and cardinal importance," for the Imperial Parliament would then remain the Imperial Parliament and its



supremacy would be an established fact. "The legislative authority in Dublin," continued Mr. Chamberlain—"you may call it a Parliament—will be a subordinate and not a coequal authority." He went on to say that if the inclusion of Ulster was left an open question, so that there might be two assemblies in Ireland instead of one, it would differ little from his own proposal of national councils or a national council; and all the elaborate provisions for the protection of the minority would then be needless. So far then as the Irish Government Bill was concerned, Mr. Chamberlain said—"in these changes and in the prospect of greater changes to come, I rejoice to see an approximation between the views of my right honourable friend and myself which I did not dare to hope for at the time I left the Cabinet." With respect to the Land Bill very serious differences of opinion would still exist. Many of its objectionable features had been removed; but he thought the whole policy of the Bill was of doubtful expediency. The money might soon be wanted at home, and you could not grant to the people of Ireland what you would not also give to the crofters of Scotland and the agricultural labourers of England. Mr. Chamberlain concluded by saying, amid loud Liberal cheers, "For my own part, I recognize the spirit of conciliation with which the Government has tried to meet some of the objections which have already been taken to their scheme. I know I need not assure my right honourable friend, or my friends around me, that the differences which unfortunately for a time—I hope it may be only a short time—have separated me from my right honourable friend, have not impaired my respect or regard for his character and abilities. I am not an irreconcilable opponent. My right honourable friend has made very considerable modifications in his Bill. All I can say is, if that movement continues, as I hope it will, I shall be delighted to be relieved from an attitude which I only assumed with the greatest reluctance, and which I can only maintain with the deepest pain and regret."



The effect of this important declaration was to take all interest out of the debate. Mr. W. H. Smith made a speech in which he said that if an Irish Parliament was to be established, he for one would not be a party to the introduction of checks to control the exercise of its authority; Mr. Illingworth noted with satisfaction that the differences between the Prime Minister and Mr. Chamberlain were already disappearing, and Mr. Parnell accepted the Bill without very hearty approval; but the question everybody was thinking of was "What will Mr. Chamberlain do?" Lord Hartington and his followers had made an alliance with the Conservatives; Mr. Chamberlain and his friends hesitated to make the plunge. They were not irreconcilable—would they be reconciled? In the small hours of the succeeding Tuesday morning, the 20th of April, the House adjourned for the Easter recess, to reassemble on Monday, the 3rd of May. The second reading of the Irish Government Bill had been fixed for the 10th, and that of the Land Purchase Bill for the 13th of May.

The fortnight's holiday was, for politicians, only a holiday in name. Never had there been such a busy and excited Easter; never since the passing of the great Reform Bill, not even when Peel was making up his mind to repeal the Corn Laws, had there been so acute a crisis in political affairs. Meetings were held in most of the constituencies, and there was a striking expression of opinion by Liberal Associations in favour of Home Rule. Mr. Chamberlain wrote to a correspondent—"My idea undoubtedly is that provincial assemblies might be created which would occupy somewhat the same position as the separate States do in the American Union, and the separate Provinces in the Dominion of Canada." He added that "if Wales and Scotland did not desire such an extension of local government there is no reason why the experiment should not, in the first instance, be confined to Ireland." Mr. Peter Rylands telegraphed, in reply to remonstrances from Burnley, that he should act with Mr. Chamberlain and Mr.

Trevelyan, and would not in any other way unite with the Conservatives in promoting party views. On the first day of the recess the formation of the Liberal Union was announced, with Mr. Maude as Secretary. On the same evening the City Liberal Association met to consider the Irish Bills. A letter from Mr. Samuel Morley was read "venturing to express an emphatic opinion that Mr. Gladstone should receive from us, in the main, encouraging support in this his grand endeavour to grapple with a difficulty which, so long as it remains unsolved, must be a source of irritation and danger, and which, when solved, will clear the way for much legislation greatly needed for the rest of the United Kingdom." A resolution in this sense was proposed by Mr. R. Causton and seconded by Mr. Cowan Smith, and though an amendment was moved by Sir John Lubbock and seconded by Mr. Courtney, only twenty hands were held up for it in a meeting of more than four hundred men. On the same day the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Quebec telegraphed to Mr. Gladstone a resolution passed by that body *nemine contradicente*, expressing sympathy with his "noble efforts peacefully to solve the problem of Home Rule in Ireland, without disintegrating the Empire." At Leeds, the largest meeting of the Liberal Association ever held was called to support the Government. Mr. (now Sir James) Kitson presided, and a resolution of confidence, proposed by Alderman Tatham and seconded by Mr. Wemyss Reid, was, after some discussion, carried by an overwhelming vote. These are only illustrations of what went on all over the country and all through the Empire. From every great town at home, from every colony over the sea, there went up to Mr. Gladstone a general chorus of approval and encouragement.

The voices on the other side were almost as numerous and quite as loud, but entirely different in kind. All the colonies approved, all the Liberal Associations at home rallied to Mr. Gladstone's call, but rich men, influential

men, leaders who had been looked up to, held aloof. It was Paul's experience over again that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called. The great heart of the people leaped up at the thought of giving self-government to Irishmen, but the men of influence held back and checked the impulse. The popular feeling strongly affected the more popular group of Mr. Gladstone's opponents. Mr. Chamberlain went down to a great meeting of the Birmingham Liberal Association, which he addressed in one of the ablest speeches he ever made. He appealed to the Liberals of Birmingham so to discuss the question "that, when this time of trial is past, we may once more unite, without embittered memories, without unkind reflections, to carry forward the great work on which hitherto we have been unanimous." Passing both the Irish Bills under review, he declared absolutely against the Land Bill; but only conditionally against the Irish Government Bill. If the Irish Members were kept at Westminster and "allowed to vote and to speak on all questions which would specially refer to them, then," said Mr. Chamberlain, "they would remain an integral part of this Imperial realm, they would have their share of its privileges and their responsibility for its burdens. In that case the Imperial Parliament would be able to retain its control of Imperial taxation in Ireland, and for all Imperial purposes the Parliament at Westminster would speak for a United Kingdom." He would like to see the case of Ulster met in some way or other, perhaps by a separate assembly. All the checks and restrictions the Bill contained would then be needless. Pledges for these changes must be given before the Bill was read a second time—"if not," said Mr. Chamberlain, "my duty is clear. I am not going to enter any cave. I am not going to join any coalition of discordant elements and parties, but in the case I have mentioned I shall give an independent, but I hope also a perfectly frank and loyal, opposition to the measures which, in my heart and conscience I believe, in their present form, will



be disastrous and dangerous to the best interests of the United Kingdom.

The attitude thus taken by Mr. Chamberlain was adopted by his political friends. After a vote of confidence proposed by Mr. Schnadhorst and seconded by Mr. Henry Payton had been carried, Mr. Jesse Collings said they had to come to a conclusion—not upon Home Rule, but—as to alterations in the form of Home Rule; and Dr. Dale proposing a vote of confidence in Mr. Gladstone said that henceforth it would be extremely difficult for any party in the State to refuse Home Rule, and therein lay the great merit of Mr. Gladstone's Bill. "Let us," said Dr. Dale, "be content this Session to give Ireland a legislature of her own without excluding her representatives from the Imperial Parliament. That will be a good piece of work to do, and when we have done that let us consider what further legislation will be necessary in order to meet the new relations between the United Kingdom and Ireland." In concluding, Dr. Dale said: "We want to aid not to hinder this great work. We are anxious that Mr. Gladstone should crown all his past achievements by a great measure that shall concede to the Irish nation its just demands, and shall bring to a close the calamities and the crimes of six hundred years. In that spirit I move this resolution; in that spirit I ask you to accept it." The resolution of confidence in Mr. Gladstone was carried by an overwhelming majority with rapturous cheers. How it came to pass that Birmingham and the group of politicians who represent it, drifted from this position into one of irreconcilable antagonism to Home Rule, and of active co-operation with the Tory party, is one of the difficult and painful problems of the political history of the times. My story will solve it as we go along.

While this meeting of Mr. Chamberlain's was being held in Birmingham, Earl Spencer and Mr. John Morley were addressing a vast gathering at Newcastle-on-Tyne, Dr. Spence Watson in the chair. Lord Spencer gave his



emphatic adhesion to Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy, and declared that coercion had for ever become impossible under any Liberal administration. He had expected that Mr. Parnell would have with him four-fifths of the Irish representatives, and as the result of his long experience as Viceroy he declared that though he had known all the evidence that had been given as to the crimes of 1881 and 1882, he had never heard or seen any evidence of complicity in crime against any Irish representatives. Mr. John Morley, who from first to last carried his great audience with him, said that the genius of our institutions was against persistence in coercion and in favour of extending self-government to Ireland. The whole spirit of our history pointed in the same direction as well as the spirit of the time and of the age. He described the other courses—none of which were permanently possible, and after defending the provisions of the Government Bills said, "We have brought in our Bills, and though—I think I may speak for my colleagues—we do not postulate acceptance of every clause of these two Bills as a saving and necessary article of faith, we say that on the lines of these Bills you may build the fabric of peace in Ireland." This expression of popular feeling in Newcastle was confirmed on the same day at Bradford by the return of Mr. Shaw Lefevre for the late Mr. Forster's seat in the Central division, by a majority of 780—4,407 to 3,627—over his Conservative opponent Mr. Hoare. On Good Friday morning the papers published the Irish Land Bill, and side by side with it the report of a great meeting at St. James's Hall over which Mr. Labouchere presided, and at which Mr. George Howell moved the first resolution and Mr. Bradlaugh was among the speakers. This meeting gave almost unanimous support to Mr. Gladstone's Bill.

On Easter Monday Lord Hartington met his constituents in Rossendale. At a private meeting of the Liberal Three Hundred he apologized for his appearance on the platform with Lord Salisbury at Her Majesty's Theatre by saying

that the meeting was called by a society to which he had for some time belonged, and which was without political bias. He told them that he might himself undertake to move the rejection of the Irish Government Bill on the second reading. In the evening Lord Hartington addressed a great meeting in the Co-operative Hall. Before he spoke letters were read from Lord Derby and Mr. Bright. Mr. Bright, who refused to attend any meeting during the recess, praised Lord Hartington's action as "at once consistent and courageous." "The sad party division," he wrote, "has arisen from the introduction of measures of vast importance without any sufficient preparation of the public or the party mind to accept them. The measures themselves, and the time and manner of their introduction in Parliament, are the causes of the division and not the opinions and criticisms of honourable men. The party may be shaken for a time, but it will recover, for consistency and courage and honour will never be without value in the estimation of our countrymen." This testimonial helped Lord Hartington personally, but did not gain acceptance for his political views. He felt that he was in an uncongenial atmosphere. He was as apologetic as he had been at the private meeting, and just as firm. The feeling of the audience was against the course he had taken and intended to take, but it was favourable to him personally and a neutral resolution was passed. His position as compared with that of Mr. Chamberlain and the Birmingham group was thus defined by *The Daily News*: "Lord Hartington says, in effect, 'I will never consent to Home Rule; but if it must come, Land Purchase must go with it,' " Mr. Chamberlain says " 'No Land Purchase on any account, but I am willing to consider a modified form of Home Rule.' "

All through the Easter week the public debate went on, but the parties to it were the divided Liberals, the Tory leaders holding aloof. Their strength was to sit still. Their work was being done for them, and their interference was more likely to hinder than to help. Lord Selborne

and the Duke of Argyll poured oil upon the flames of discord, and Mr. Goschen and Lord Hartington went on a mission to Scotland against Home Rule. On the one side were Mr. Mundella at Sheffield, Mr. Stansfeld at Halifax, Mr. H. H. Fowler at Wolverhampton, the National Reform Union at Manchester, where only thirteen persons voted against Mr. Gladstone's policy, and Mr. John Morley at Glasgow; and on the other Sir Michael Hicks-Beach at Bristol, and Lord Iddesleigh at Plymouth, besides the Scottish propaganda of the Dissident Liberals. Mr. Caine told his constituents that he had taken a long step towards Home Rule, but there were obstacles in the way. He objected to the exclusion of the Irish members from Westminster, to the composition of the proposed Irish legislature, and to the veto resting with the first order in the Irish Assembly instead of with the Imperial Parliament. He thought Imperial taxation in Ireland should be under the Imperial Parliament, as the Bill left it; and he was entirely opposed to the Land Bill. Mr. Courtney found a meeting of his constituents at Liskeard strongly inclined to protest against his views, but Liskeard, like Rossendale, passed a neutral resolution. At the end of the week the names of "the Liberal Unionist Committee" came out, with four Dukes, nine Earls, a Viscount, two other Lords, and twenty-eight members of the House of Commons, raised the next day to thirty-three, when it was announced that a number of other Liberal members had expressed their sympathy but did not wish their names to be published.

On the day of the reassembling of Parliament Mr. Gladstone issued an address to his constituents, in which he spoke of the favourable reception his Home Rule Bill had met from "that vast British and Irish public which has already passed beyond one hundred millions," and told them they "must not be discouraged if at home, and particularly in the upper ranks of society, we hear a variety of discordant notes—notes alike discordant from our policy



and from one another." He spoke at present of the Irish Government Bill, and left the Irish Land Bill "to stand on the declarations we have already made, adding only an expression of the regret with which I find that, while the sands are running in the hour-glass, the Irish landlords have as yet given no indication of a desire to accept a proposal framed in a spirit of the utmost allowable regard to their apprehensions and their interests." After paying a high compliment to Lord Hartington and Mr. Bright he sketched the history of former Liberal secessions, all of which had ended in disaster; pointed out that the secessionists "offer us either a hundred conflicting remedies or no remedy at all," and said that both Liberal and Tory opponents "seem to suspect, what we well know, that the strife which they are stirring can only end one way, can only end in the concession of self-government to Ireland." Passing in review some of the alarms brought upon the stage, Mr. Gladstone went on to speak of the constitution of the main body of the opposing host. It was the great army of class and its dependents; who "have uniformly been beaten by a power more difficult to marshal, but resistless when marshalled, by the upright sense of the nation." The policy of the Government was "the establishment in Dublin of a Legislative Body, empowered to make laws for Irish as contradistinguished from Imperial affairs." All questions of detail were subsidiary—this was the question which included and absorbed them all, "the question whether you will or will not have regard to the prayer of Ireland for the management by herself of the affairs specifically and exclusively her own. This and no other is the matter on which the House of Commons has at once to decide. If on this matter it speaks with a clear and intelligible voice, I feel the strongest assurance that the others, difficult as some of them are, will, nevertheless, with the aid of full discussion, with the aid of a wise and conciliatory spirit, be found capable of a rational and tolerable settlement."



This important manifesto had great effect in the country and smoothed the way of many men in the House of Commons. It clearly indicated that the Land Bill was not absolutely essential to the scheme, and that the Irish Government Bill might be greatly changed in Committee. A special meeting of the Council of the National Liberal Federation was held in London on the 5th of May, in which a motion was proposed supporting Mr. Gladstone, but asking him to retain the Irish members. Mr. J. E. Ellis moved an amendment of unconditional support. This was seconded by Mr. Mathers, and after considerable discussion was carried by an overwhelming majority. Resolutions in support of the Government were passed in most of the great towns. At Manchester, where Lord Granville and Mr. Shaw Lefevre addressed a great meeting, the resolution urged the Government to accept amendments. The desire and hope of the great mass of the Liberal party was that the Bill should be read a second time and modified afterwards in form, but not in substance. Mr. Bright, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Henry James, Mr. Courtney, and Mr. Trevelyan, had held aloof from the Liberal Unionist Committee, and it was uncertain how some of them would vote on the second reading. The fate of the Bill, of the Government, of the Parliament, was in their hands, and the problem of the moment was What would they do with it?

On the 6th of May a statement was published, that Mr. Chamberlain had intimated to some members of the Cabinet, that he could support the second reading, if a pledge were given that the Irish representation at Westminster should be undisturbed; and on the 8th a letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. T. H. Bolton was published, in which he repeated the assurance and said: "The key of the position is the maintenance of the representation of Ireland in the Imperial Parliament, and of her full responsibility for all Imperial affairs. This is not a detail which can be safely left to the hazards of Committee. It is a

point of supreme importance which ought to be decided on the threshold of the discussion." Mr. Chamberlain concluded his letter by assuring Mr. Bolton that if the concession were made, he hoped "the present imminent danger of a fatal breach in the ranks of the Liberal party may be happily averted." This was the position of affairs when the debate on the second reading began on the 10th of May. An estimate of the number and probable attitude of the recalcitrant and the wavering Liberals, published on that day, showed that thirty-four Liberal members had joined the Liberal Unionist Committee, that thirty more were regarded as certain opponents of the Bill, and that thirty-nine were waverers. If the whole six hundred and sixty-nine members, without the Speaker, voted, it would need the transfer of eighty-four Liberal votes to defeat the second reading by a majority of one.

The problem of the next four weeks was how a sufficient number of the waverers could be brought round to save the Government. Mr. Gladstone moved the second reading in a debating speech in which he replied to the criticisms and objections of opponents, and especially to the scruples and hesitations of the waverers. With respect to the exclusion of the Irish members, the Government could not do more than promise fair consideration to any proposition made in Committee. He then pointed out the circumstances in which Irish members might return when questions of Imperial taxation arose. It would also, he said, be the duty of the Government "to give an unprejudiced ear to proposals which others may make for ensuring a continued manifestation of common interest between Great Britain and Ireland in Imperial concerns." After comparing the Liberal and Tory policy in Irish affairs, he said both parties had spoken plainly; but had the third power in the House spoken plainly? Had not the time arrived when they ought to know what was Lord Hartington's scheme, and what his policy was to be? What were the alternatives to the Ministerial plan?

Lord Hartington followed, moving the rejection of the Bill, and expressing the belief that Mr. Gladstone's concessions on the retention of the Irish members were too vague to satisfy Mr. Chamberlain and his friends. The debate went on for twelve nights, and lasted all through May and into June. The Government and the Opposition were both playing for the waverers, and each with some appearance of success. As the debate went on some of the doubters made up their minds, though many hesitated to the last. Some consulted their constituents, and the firm attitude of the Liberal Associations in favour of the Bill kept some, at least, of the Liberals faithful to the Government.

The debate was not the centre of political interest. It was in what was going on among politicians, and not in their speeches in Parliament, that the drift of opinion was shown. On the 12th of May a meeting of Liberal members of Parliament favourable to the grant of autonomy to Ireland but opposed to the measure in its present shape, was held at Mr. Chamberlain's house. Fifty-two members were present, and Mr. Chamberlain presided. He told the story of the private negotiations with the Government, from which he had expected complete reconciliation. He had given way on some minor points, and when the communications came to an end on Saturday he understood that the retention of the Irish members had been conceded. Mr. Gladstone's attitude in moving the second reading had therefore taken him by surprise, his concessions being totally inadequate and illusory. Mr. Trevelyan followed with a dignified expression of the great regret with which he felt that he could not support the Bill, and an earnest—almost impassioned—appeal against it. The meeting passed no resolutions, but the conversation resulted in a unanimous determination to vote against the Bill unless it was recast to meet their views. Mr. Caine reported that a hundred and two Liberals had promised to vote against the second reading, and that thirty or forty more were



undecided, some of whom would certainly vote with the hundred and two. The feeling of the meeting was that in the event of the Bill being defeated a Hartington-Chamberlain Government should be formed. Two days later, on Friday the 14th, sixty-four Liberal members met at Devonshire House, with Lord Hartington in the chair. Of this sixty-four exactly half had been at Mr. Chamberlain's gathering. Nine other Liberals sent letters sympathizing with the object of the meeting. Adding these to the sixty-four present and the twenty absent who had been at Mr. Chamberlain's, the avowed Liberal opponents of the Bill were ninety-three. Lord Hartington said that the modifications in the Bill which the Government had suggested increased his objections to it. The proposal that the second reading should be accepted as a vote on the principle of Home Rule and that the Bill should then be held over to an autumn session he rejected, because the tension of feeling meanwhile—especially in Ulster—might have disastrous results. He could not even accept an abstract resolution now these Bills had shown what such a resolution might mean. There was only before them the painful duty of rejecting the Bill. Mr. Chamberlain agreed with Lord Hartington. Even should Mr. Gladstone offer to make the concessions they had demanded, it would now be needful to consider in what spirit the concessions were made. The meeting passed no resolutions, but it was unanimous in feeling.

This union of the two groups of Liberal opponents was not unexpected, though it came about suddenly. In the adjourned debate on the previous night Mr. Campbell-Bannerman had once more stated the willingness of the Government "to consider with the most friendly mind all the suggestions that may be made for enabling the Irish members to take part in our discussions ; but as soon as he had sat down Mr. Chamberlain put his notes in his pocket with an air of disappointment and disgust, and glancing at Mr. Caine, shook his head and went away. At Devonshire



House he wiped the dust of the Ministerial lobbies from off his feet, and declared for unqualified opposition. The group who had acted with him now raised their terms. It was on their behalf that the proposals had been made to which Lord Hartington referred. The Government had not accepted them, though there was no unwillingness on their part to make a compromise. The Devonshire House meeting put an end to all expectation of reconciliation. From that time to the end of the debate the only question was, how many members would adhere to the policy on which Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain were agreed. If all the ninety-three voted against the second reading, the Bill would be rejected. But in addition to these there were eleven other declared opponents and eighteen more whose votes were doubtful. The Opposition reckoned on a minimum majority of forty-one, a probable majority of seventy-seven, and an even larger possible majority against the Bill.

This reckoning was made without allowing for two disturbing elements,—the threat of dissolution on the one hand and Lord Salisbury on the other. As soon as the defeat of the Bill seemed probable, the Government let it be known that they would appeal to the country, and the political movements after the middle of May were governed by the certainty that this appeal would be made. The Dissentient Liberals were thinking of a Government of their own, and *The Times* of Saturday morning, the 15th of May, pointed to six men in the Commons—Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Trevelyan, Sir Henry James, and Mr. Courtney—and five in the Lords—Lord Selborne, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Northbrook, Lord Carlingford, and the Earl of Derby—who might make a Cabinet. This Ministry, said *The Times*, would be dependent upon the benevolent support of the Conservatives, but would not involve the necessity for any closer alliance than political conditions justify or invite. On the same day on which these anticipations of a Hartington-

Chamberlain Ministry had been published there was a Conference of the National Union of Conservative Associations in the afternoon, and a great meeting at St. James's Hall at night. The Conservative leaders were in the highest possible spirits. Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, as Chairman of the Conference, patronized their Liberal allies, and assured them of help if their seats were endangered, but declared that they would place the Government in Lord Salisbury's hands. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach congratulated his party on their temporary self-effacement, which was now about to be rewarded. The tide was running strong to float them on to fortune.

At the evening meeting Lord Salisbury made one of those speeches which alarm his friends and cheer his foes, in which his rhetoric runs away with his judgment. After explaining some passages in his former speeches, and discussing the Irish question at some length, he said Ireland was not a nation, but two nations, "two deeply divided and bitterly antagonistic nations." We were asked to have confidence in the Irish people. "Well, of course, there are some people in whom we undoubtedly have confidence," he replied. "But are the preachers of that doctrine prepared to maintain that you are bound to have confidence in everybody? If they are, their course to the Bankruptcy Court will be short and easy. Confidence depends on the people in whom you are to confide. You would not confide free representative institutions to the Hottentots, for instance . . . And again, the confidence you repose in people will depend something upon the habits they have acquired. Well, the habits the Irish have acquired are very bad. They have become habituated to the use of knives and slugs." Later in the speech he answered the question as to an alternative policy to Home Rule. "My alternative policy," he said, "is that Parliament should enable the government of England to govern Ireland. Apply that recipe honestly, consistently and resolutely for twenty years, and at the end of that time you will find that Ireland will be ready to

accept any gifts in the way of local government, or repeal of coercion laws that you may wish to give her. What she wants is government—government that does not flinch—that does not vary, government that she cannot hope to beat down by agitations at Westminster—government that does not alter in its resolutions or in its temperature by the party changes which take place at Westminster." He would rather emigrate another million of the Irish people than spend a hundred and fifty millions on the pacification of Ireland. Then, turning to the anticipations of coming dissolution, and reminding his audience that the Conservative leaders had, "at the risk of some blame from our friends, stepped into the shade and left others who are not our political friends to fight the battle," he said the result of what they saw in the morning's papers had justified their action. Then, as though in reply to the suggestion of the Hartington-Chamberlain Ministry, he told his followers not to forget that they were the most important party in this matter, and that it would be the Conservatives who would furnish the greater number of the votes to which the victory in the coming division would be due. "We receive our allies," he said, "with a hearty welcome, with great willingness, and we are very glad to assist them so far as the agreement with our own opinion will carry us." But they were not to forget that it was mainly to their power that the victory would be due, that the chief burden lay on them, and that it was of them that the destinies of their country would be required.

This speech was of much help to the Government. The Liberal seceders took it with great humility, and no more was heard of the proposed Dissident Liberal Ministry; Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Hartington were to set the board but not to share the feast. In the adjourned debate on Monday the 17th Mr. Stansfeld made excellent use of Lord Salisbury's indiscretions. He had read with nothing short of amazement a speech "rivalling and excelling in calculated recklessness any speech ever uttered either by



Nationalist or Orangeman"; and he made an effective contrast between Lord Salisbury's twenty years of coercion and the new hopes and new determinations with which the policy of the Government had already inspired the Irish people. On the next day Lord Hartington spoke at a great meeting at Bradford, and while firmly holding his position took occasion to declare that he had never swerved from the principle of equal treatment for Irishmen and Englishmen. "I say, remove from Ireland any grievances which are proved to be grievances and extend to Ireland the liberties which you claim and which you value for yourselves." On the same night Mr. Bryce in the course of an able speech of high constitutional argument threw out the hint of a dissolution by stating that the Government would show no reluctance to test the opinion of the constituencies. On Wednesday Lord Salisbury went to a Primrose League meeting and explained that he did not regard twenty years of resolute government as the only treatment for the social ills of Ireland but that remedial legislation should go with it. Lord Salisbury's explanations had but little effect though his speech frightened some Liberal waverers by showing them whither their steps were tending, and they harked back at once. Hopes sprang up in some quarters that a dissolution might be avoided; there were renewed proposals for a compromise, and rumours that the Queen was reluctant to authorize a dissolution. These rumours were false, though when Mr. Gladstone went down to Windsor on the 25th of May after a meeting of the Cabinet some sanction seemed to be given to them. He went at the Queen's request, to see her before her departure for Balmoral.

The first result of the Cabinet meeting was the issue of a notice to "all members of the Liberal party who are desirous to vote in favour of the establishment of a legislative body in Dublin for the management of affairs specifically and exclusively Irish," asking them to assemble at the Foreign Office on Thursday the 27th at noon. Two hundred and



twenty-three responded to the call. Mr. Gladstone spoke at some length, repeating his former concessions and adding that the Bill would be withdrawn after the second reading, and either proceeded with in an autumn session, or a new session would be called to consider an amended Bill; he thought the latter course the best. It was to be understood, too, that a vote for the second reading of the Home Rule Bill did not pledge any member to the support of the Land Bill. This concession was cordially accepted by the meeting, and was thought to be satisfactory to Mr. Chamberlain's group, who at a meeting on the night before had agreed to demand that the Bill should be withdrawn after the second reading. The fortunes of the Bill seemed to have brightened and the dissolution receded into the distance. When Parliament met in the afternoon Sir Michael Hicks-Beach asked about this announcement and Mr. Gladstone explained it. On Friday the 28th Sir Michael Hicks-Beach brought it before the House on a motion for adjournment, declared that the Bill had become a mere continuance-in-office Bill, and asked for explanations. Mr. Gladstone replied, and in the course of his reply emphatically laid it down "that nothing can be more distinct and definite, either as to substance or to time, than the promise and engagement which this House, and those voting for the second reading, will give by that vote,—first of all that they think that a Parliament for the management of Irish affairs, or a legislative body as we have called it, ought to be established; and secondly, that it is their duty, and their intention, at the first available moment, to set about establishing it." Lord Randolph Churchill retorted in a violent harangue which Sir William Harcourt answered. Then the debate went on, the Government prospect remaining clearer till Monday the 31st when it once more clouded over. On that afternoon there was a meeting of the Chamberlain group swollen by Hartingtonians so that fifty-five responded to Mr. Caine's summons. At that meeting a letter was read from Mr. Bright announcing that he

should vote against the second reading, but that he hoped his example would not influence others whom he recommended to abstain from voting. Mr. Chamberlain explained that he had thought the best plan to be to walk out of the House when the division was called. Lord Hartington and his friends, however, had refused to consent to this course, and the Hartingtonians who were at Mr. Chamberlain's meeting argued against it there. After half an hour's debate a vote was taken, when thirty-three were for voting against the second reading, twelve were for abstaining, one left the room, and three were for supporting the Government. At a second vote, the three held their ground, only four were for abstaining, and forty-seven were for opposition. Mr. Chamberlain yielded to the majority against his better judgment, and the Bill was doomed. On the next day, the 1st of June, Lord Hartington held a meeting of his followers who pledged themselves to vote against the Bill; and in the evening Mr. Chamberlain resumed the debate in an able, effective, and uncompromising opposition speech.

In Sir William Harcourt's forcible and eloquent reply—which followed one from Mr. Sexton and practically wound up the evening's discussion—he exposed Mr. Chamberlain's inconsistencies, and showed that he was practically pledging the Radicalism of Birmingham to the support of what Lord Salisbury had called “the traditional policy of the Tory party.” On the 2nd of June there was an important meeting of the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation for the purpose of receiving the resignation of officers and of taking action thereon. The resignations, which were all from Birmingham, were those of Mr. Harris, Chairman of the Committee, Alderman Kenrick, Mr. Richard Chamberlain, Dr. Crosskey, Mr. J. Thackray Bunce, members of the Committee, and Mr. Powell Williams, the honorary secretary. The Committee accepted the resignations with sincere regret and with the expression of a hope of a not distant reconciliation. An

emergency Committee was appointed, and a resolution was passed for the raising of a special fund for the holding of meetings and the circulation of literature. On Thursday the debate was resumed by Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and Mr. Bradlaugh spoke. The feeling of the people, he said, was that they would not palter with this question any longer. Mr. John Morley, who spoke last, wound up an argumentative speech by an earnest appeal to the Dissident Liberals, assuring them that the division would not be an end of the question, and even an electoral campaign would not be the end. "The Irish problem will remain. Even though you refuse our solution, I can only express my conviction that no solution will bring that problem one effective stage further, that does not proceed on the lines and to the extent of the Bill that is now before you."

On the last night, the debate was resumed by Mr. Goschen, in a speech of great power and full of the solemnity and passion which had become characteristic of him. Mr. Parnell, in accepting the Bill as a full settlement of the Irish claims, explained that a much-quoted speech of his in favour of Irish Protection, was made at a time when the Conservative party had promised Home Rule, with control of the tariff, if they won the elections of 1885. This brought an indignant denial from Sir Michael Hicks-Beach that any such resolution had ever been before the Cabinet, but Mr. Parnell persisted. Mr. Joseph Cowen made one of his eloquent appeals on the Home Rule side, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach followed with a dull *résumé* of the debate, which admirably prepared the House for one of the most interesting, powerful, and persuasive speeches even Mr. Gladstone has ever made. It was twenty-five minutes past eleven when Mr. Gladstone rose, and the House was crowded in every part with an audience full of the suppressed excitement of a pending momentous decision. On such occasions, a kind of still disquiet hangs over the assembly, partly subjective and partly objective, as though the sense each person has of nervous strain made him



sensible of the same feeling in all the rest. Mr. Gladstone began with some weakness of voice, but recovered its full power ere long. He praised the speeches of Mr. Cowen and Mr. Parnell and then turned to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, whose "simple facts," he said, were pure fictions. On the question of reconstructing the Bill, members opposite could see no difference between promising that a Bill should not be reconstructed, and not having promised that it shall be reconstructed. "It appears to me," said Mr. Gladstone, "that in promising that a Bill shall be reconstructed it is bound to be reconstructed, but a person who has not promised that a Bill shall be reconstructed is free to reconstruct it, but not bound." Mr. Gladstone then passed in review the arguments of his opponents, and continued—"I hear constantly the words 'Unionist' and 'Separatist,' but I want to know who are the Unionists and who are the Separatists. I see this Bill, in newspapers of great circulation and elsewhere, described as the 'Separatist Bill.' Several gentlemen opposite adopt, and make their own that style of description. Speaking of that description I say it is the merest slang of vulgar controversy." Proceeding to discuss this question Mr. Gladstone quoted with approval a sentence of Mr. Cowen's that "the severance of legislatures is often the union of countries, and the union of legislatures is often the severance of countries." This point was illustrated by European and other examples, and especially by that of Canada. Turning then to the Bill he asked, "What is before us in the event of the rejection of this Bill? What alternative has been proposed? Mr. Chamberlain had proposed alternatives, and plenty of them. He said a dissolution had no terrors for him. "He has trimmed his vessel and touched his rudder in such a masterly way, that whichever of the winds of heaven may blow, it fills his sails." Mr. Chamberlain's "series of expedients" were "visibly the creations of a vivid imagination, born of the hour and perishing with the hour." Lord Salisbury, however, had a plan—twenty years' coercion.



There was one question to be answered as to the proposal in this Bill—the question of time. Why had it been brought forward now? For two reasons: first, as the only alternative to the measure of coercion proposed by the late Government on the 26th of January; second, because "this is the earliest moment in our Parliamentary history when we have the voice of Ireland authentically expressed in our hearing." There was another reason: "I feel that in attempting to palter with the demand of Ireland so conveyed in forms known to the Constitution, and any rejection of the conciliatory policy, might have an effect that none of us could desire, in strengthening that party of disorder which is behind the back of the Irish representatives, which skulks in America, which skulks in Ireland, which, I trust, is losing ground and is losing force, and will lose ground and will lose force, in proportion as our policy is carried out." There was but one question before them as to the demand of the Irish nation. "It is as to the time and circumstances of granting it. There is no question in our minds that it will be granted."

After quoting Burke's first speech at Bristol as to the mode of granting such requests, Mr. Gladstone approached his peroration. "This, if I understand it, is one of the golden moments in our history, one of those opportunities which may come and may go, but which rarely return, or if they return, return at long intervals, and under circumstances which no man can forecast. There have been such golden moments even in the tragic history of Ireland. As her poet says—

‘One time the harp of Innisfail  
Was tuned to notes of gladness,’

and then he goes on to say—

‘But yet did oftener tell a tale  
Of more prevailing sadness.’

There was such a golden moment in 1795, when, on the

mission of Lord Fitzwilliam, the Parliament of Grattan was on the point of solving the Irish problem. The cup was at her lips when the hand of England dashed it to the ground. But the long periodic time had at last run out and the star of Ireland had mounted into the heavens. We have done what Ireland was doing for herself in 1794, emancipated the Roman Catholics and reformed her representation. That gift of the franchise," said Mr. Gladstone, "was the last act required to make the success of Ireland in her effort absolutely sure. We have given Ireland a voice; we must listen for a moment to what she says. We must all listen—both sides, both parties—I mean as they are divided on this question—divided, I am afraid, by an almost immeasurable gap. Well, Sir, we do not undervalue and we do not despise the forces opposed to us. I have described them as a force of classes and their dependents, and as a general description, as a slight and rude outline of a description, it is perfectly true. I do not deny that many are against us whom we should have expected to be for us. I do not deny that some whom we see against us have caused us, by their conscientious action, the bitterest disappointment. But, Sir, they are very powerful. You have power, you have rank, you have wealth, you have station, you have organization, you have place and power. What have we? We think that we have the people's heart. We believe and we know that we have the promise of the harvest of the future. As to the people's heart, you may dispute it and with perfect sincerity. Let that matter make its own proof. As to the harvest of the future, I doubt if you have so much confidence. I believe that there is in the breast of many a man who means to vote against us to-night a profound misgiving, approaching even to a deep conviction, that the end will be as we foresee it and not as you; that the ebbing tide is with you and that the flowing tide is with us. Ireland stands at your bar, expectant, hopeful, almost suppliant. Her words are the words of truth and soberness. She asks a blessed oblivion

of the past, and in that oblivion our interest is a deeper interest than hers. My right honourable friend the member for East Edinburgh asked us to-night to abide by the traditions of which we are the heirs. What traditions? By the Irish traditions? Go into the length and breadth of the world. Ransack the literature of all countries. Find, if you can, a single voice, a single book—find, I would almost say, a single newspaper article, unless the product of the day, in which the conduct of England towards Ireland is anywhere treated except with profound and bitter condemnation. Are these the traditions by which we are exhorted to stand? Oh! they are a sad exception to the glory of our country. They are more than a black blot upon the pages of its history; and what we want to do is to stand by the traditions of which we are the heirs, in all matters except our relations with Ireland, and to make our relations with Ireland conform to the other traditions of our country. So we treat our traditions, so we hail the demand of Ireland for what I call a blessed oblivion of the past. She asks also a boon for the future, and that boon for the future, unless we are much mistaken, will be a boon in respect to honour to us, no less than a boon to her in respect to happiness, prosperity, and peace. Think, I beseech you, think well, think wisely, think not for the moment, but for the years that are to come, before you reject our plan.”

The division was called at ten minutes past one, and its result was uncertain up to the last moment. When Mr. Arnold Morley and Mr. Marjoribanks, who were tellers for the Ministry, came back to the table before the Opposition tellers, Mr. Brand and Mr. Caine, everybody knew that the Government was beaten. Five minutes passed before the other tellers came back, and when the Clerk at the table handed the paper to Mr. Brand the Opposition rose and cheered and waved their hats. Mr. Brand read out the numbers. “The Ayes to the Right were 311; the Noes to the Left were 341”; and the cheers broke out again.

It is a curious instance of the irony of history that one of the tellers of the Coalition in this momentous division should be a Liberal, who afterwards rejoined the party and became an advocate of the policy of which he thus led the defeat. The division was the largest which had ever been taken in the House of Commons. Including the Speaker and the four tellers, 657 members were present; and the numbers, including tellers, were 313 to 343—a majority of 30 against the Government. The minority consisted of 228 Liberals and 85 Nationalists. The majority was made up of 249 Conservatives and 94 Liberals. One Nationalist and ten Liberals and two Conservatives were absent. Of the absent Liberals three were ill and seven walked out before the division. Of the two Conservatives one was ill and the other, Sir R. Peel, purposely stayed away. The new policy of the Liberal party was thus defeated by Liberal votes.



## CHAPTER V.

*THE APPEAL TO THE COUNTRY.*

THE Coalition of a section of the Liberal party with the Tories, of which the division on the Home Rule Bill was the outward and visible sign, was intended only for a temporary purpose. The Liberals who voted against the Bill hoped that the threat of dissolution would not be carried out, and that a new government would be formed, with Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain for its chiefs. If Mr. Gladstone had resigned, such a Ministry might have been possible, and had it at once brought forward a strong Local Government Bill for Ireland, it might have had a brief success. But a dissolution was unavoidable. The crisis was too severe, the strain of feeling too great, for any other course to be possible. As soon as the cheering with which the Tory party acclaimed the new Coalition had ceased, Mr. Gladstone proposed that the House should adjourn till Thursday. When it met on Thursday, it was announced in both houses that the dissolution would take place as soon as the business of the Session could be wound up. After making the announcement, Mr. Gladstone said, in reply to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, that he hoped the dissolution would take place in the week ending the 26th. In this reply he spoke of the majority as resembling what in popular geology is called "plum-pudding rock." He said too, that if the result of the appeal to the country should be in favour of the Irish proposals, Parliament would not be called together for some time, but that if the Irish Bill

was rejected, it must meet more promptly. On the next day he gave the promise of a speedy meeting in case the Government were defeated. His anticipations as to the date of the dissolution were realized. The work of the Session was completed in a fortnight, and on the 25th of June the Queen's Speech was read, and Parliament prorogued, and on the next day, the 26th of June, it was dissolved. The object of the dissolution was said in the Queen's Speech to be "to ascertain the sense of my people upon the important proposal to establish a legislative body in Ireland, for the management of Irish as apart from Imperial affairs."

If it had been possible to adopt the Swiss *referendum*, and to take the sense of the people on this question alone, the election might have had a somewhat different result. But though the Government asked for a decision on the Home Rule Bill, the constituencies had before them the Irish Land Bill as well. There was no definite statement of any policy as an alternative to that of the Government. It was clear enough from the coercion proposal of the 26th of January, from the speeches of Lord Salisbury and of other Tory leaders, what the Tory plan was. But the Tory plans were not in question. The most enthusiastic Conservative in Parliament did not hope for a Tory majority. Their strength in the election, as in the previous discussion, was to sit still. The country was not to be asked to choose between a Liberal and a Tory policy, between a Liberal and a Tory Government, but only between two sections of Liberals, or between a definite scheme of Home Rule and Land Purchase, which a Liberal Government had proposed, and some indefinite plan which an influential section of the Liberal party, with benevolent Conservative help, would strike out in the future. The Liberals adhered to their scheme. On the night after the fatal division, Mr. John Morley was the chief guest at a dinner of the Eighty Club, with Mr. R. Haldane in the chair. He told his hosts he had seen defile before him

into the lobby he thought to be the wrong one, all the guests of the Eighty Club excepting one, the first and the greatest. There were three policies before them. "The first policy," said Mr. Morley, "is that of a resolute government of Ireland, a gagged press, and muzzled public meetings, suspended members of Parliament, and large emigration ;—the policy of manacles and Manitoba. Next you have the policy of those who are eager for any plan of Home Rule except the one proposed ; and thirdly you have our policy." In the election addresses the Tory proposal was kept in the background. As they had on the 26th of January given notice of a Coercion Bill, the Tory leaders could not wholly disavow coercion, but they did not avow it. Many of their followers, however, went to the other extreme, protested against "manacles and Manitoba" as a misrepresentation, and declared that the issue was between a policy of conciliation and a plan of separation. The walls of Bow and Bromley, for example, were covered with placards "Vote for Colomb and no Coercion," Captain Colomb being the Tory candidate and afterwards the Tory member. In large numbers of the constituencies the Tory candidates issued similar appeals. But it was not the Tories who made the fighting. They dropped even their party name for the time and called themselves Unionists. Their Liberal allies were placed in the forefront of the battle. It was round their colours that the opponents of the Government gathered. It was to their music the whole phalanx marched. It was Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. John Bright and Mr. Trevelyan who filled the public eye and occupied the public thoughts, and nobody noticed that behind these Liberal leaders, Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach were to be brought back to power.

The Liberal "Unionists" did not realize it themselves. The last thing that entered their minds was that of bringing back a Tory reign. The Birmingham followers of Mr. Chamberlain at once resolved to form a new Liberal

Federation, and on the day after the division it was stated in *The Times*, that though they did not conceal from themselves the dangers and difficulties of the course to which their leader was committed, they believed that the result of the election would be to increase his following and justify his attitude. Many of Mr. Chamberlain's friends said more than this. They trusted that Mr. Gladstone was done for, that the Liberals wanted a new leader and a new policy, and that Mr. Chamberlain would give them both. Mr. Chamberlain acted as though he too had this hope in him. He did not wait to take counsel with his allies on either hand, but at once assumed the attitude of leadership. He was anxious, he was even in a hurry, to let it be known that though he had voted with the Tories he was not of them but only with them. His address to his constituents was the first to appear. It was published in the papers on the 12th, two days after the dissolution was announced. It was not the election circular of a private member of Parliament, but the manifesto of a leader. It was so treated by *The Times*, which gave it in large type, filling rather more than a couple of columns. The address was not only an eloquent appeal against Mr. Gladstone's Bills, but a sketch of an alternative policy. "Liberal Unionists," it said, "while determined in their opposition to a separate Parliament for Ireland are, nevertheless, anxious to meet, as far as possible, the legitimate aspirations of the Irish people, shared, as they believe them to be, by Scotland and by Wales, for greater independence in the management of their local affairs." Four objects were to be kept in view. First, the relief of the Imperial Parliament by the devolution of Irish local business; second, the full representation of Irish opinion on matters of local Irish concern; third, to give Irishmen a fair field for legitimate local ambition and patriotism; and lastly, "by removing all unnecessary interference with Irish government on the part of Great Britain, to diminish the causes of irritation and the opportunity of collision." For these purposes there must be a



complete system of local government for the three kingdoms, but "beyond and above a purely municipal arrangement of this kind," he believed that "a larger arrangement will be found safe and desirable under which, subject to the concurrent and supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament, the various portions of the United Kingdom shall be enabled to exercise greater influence over local administration, and over legislation for their special needs and requirements."

Such was the issue set before the Radicals of England and Wales by the Radical leader whom they had acclaimed, only seven or eight months before, as the destined successor of the Grand Old Man. They failed to see that it was only another unauthorized programme, put forward, perhaps, in all sincerity by its author, but signifying nothing. To the Birmingham Radicals it signified everything, and many of Mr. Chamberlain's old Radical admirers all over the country regarded it as the serious proposal of an alternative to Mr. Gladstone's Bill. They had no doubt that the elections would result in the return of a Liberal majority; and they thought Mr. Chamberlain's scheme showed what the Irish policy of that majority would be. It did not occur to them that behind the thin lines of the Liberal and Radical Unionists were the close ranks of the Tory army, waiting to take advantage of their divisions. If it was made clear to them that a Coalition had been formed, they believed that the Liberals would lead it and that its policy would be Liberal. There was probably not a Liberal or Radical Dissentient in the Kingdom who would, for an instant, entertain the thought that Mr. Chamberlain and his friends would ever, in any circumstances, support the Tory policy in Ireland. The Birmingham Parliamentary group would have repudiated such a forecast of their future course with the liveliest indignation and disdain. They were to be the leaders, not the led. The official Liberals, and the moving spirits of the Liberal organizations might excommunicate Mr. Chamberlain, but the

whole Tory party were to be made the instruments of his triumph.

There was nothing in the other election addresses on the same side to dissipate this illusion. Mr. Trevelyan, whose address appeared on the next day, expressed the hope that the result of the election would be that a scheme which extended local government to Ireland, in accordance with the well-known principles of the Liberal party, would be proposed and carried into law. Commenting on Mr. Trevelyan's words *The Times* took up the same position—"Nothing would suit Ministerialists better than to obscure the whole question at issue, by pretending that there is no choice except to grant all that Mr. Gladstone proposes, or to carry on a system of reckless repression. It must be made clear that there is another alternative—to give the people of Ireland local control of their local affairs on the same scale as the people of England and Scotland, and on principles applicable to those countries as well as to Ireland." Lord Hartington's address was dated the 16th of June. It was an argument in reply to the Liberal Council of Rossendale which had rejected his candidature. After stating his objections to the Home Rule Bill, Lord Hartington said, "It is not denied that there exists in Ireland a general desire that a greater control should be exercised by the Irish people over their own affairs. This desire is not limited to any section or class, and within certain limits is recognized by the Liberal party as a reasonable claim. The question is to what extent it can be safely conceded." The Government measure was a "Separatist scheme," and in his opinion "Parliament should continue to represent the whole Kingdom; any power conferred on subordinate local bodies should be delegated—not surrendered—by Parliament and should be clearly defined, and the right of Parliament to control and revise the action of subordinate legislative or administrative authorities should be equally clearly reserved. The administration of justice should remain in the hands of an authority responsible to

Parliament." These suggestions, like those of Mr. Chamberlain, amounted to a modified Home Rule, which Lord Hartington clearly regarded as an alternative scheme, for he went on to say "Alternative schemes are dismissed without discussion in order to show that a policy of coercion is the only alternative to the policy of the Government. No one," he continued, "has advocated coercion as a policy, but there is a point at which any Government would be compelled to resort to what may be described as coercion." In conclusion Lord Hartington said, "In advocating the policy which I have attempted to define, I deny that I have seceded from the principles or traditions of the Liberal party. I contend, on the contrary, that I am maintaining them, and with them the best security for freedom and justice in every part of the United Kingdom."

Lord Hartington's address was a reply to Mr. Gladstone's which had been sent out a few days before it. Mr. Gladstone's address was not half the length of Mr. Chamberlain's, but like his, it dealt with the Irish problem alone. After stating the object of the dissolution, Mr. Gladstone said, "It is only a sense of the gravity of this issue which induces me, at a period of life when nature cries aloud for repose, after sitting in thirteen Parliaments to seek a seat in a fourteenth." The late Government had great advantages in dealing with the Irish question, and it had been his earnest hope to have supported them in doing so. But on the 26th of January that Government adopted a policy of Coercion which he regarded as doomed to disgraceful failure. It became an absolute duty of their successors to adopt that method or to propose another. Hence the issue before the constituencies now was, "Will you govern Ireland by Coercion, or will you let her manage her own affairs?" It was as futile now to debate the defeated Bills as to discuss "the halting, stumbling, ever-shifting, ever-vanishing projects of the intermediate class which have proceeded from the Seceding Liberals." Two clear plans were before the world, the plan of the Government and the



plan of Lord Salisbury, self-government or resolute coercion for twenty years. Their opponents called themselves Unionists. "They are not Unionists, but Paper Unionists." Ireland asked for a revival of her domestic Legislature, "not on the face of it an innovating, but a restorative proposal." Among the benefits of granting it would be "the consolidation of the unity of the Empire and a great addition to its strength ; the stoppage of a heavy, constant, and demoralizing waste of public treasure ; the abatement and gradual extinction of ignoble feuds in Ireland, and that development of her resources which experience shows to be the natural consequence of free and orderly government ; the redemption of the honour of Great Britain from a stigma fastened upon her from time immemorial, in respect to Ireland, by the judgment of the whole civilized world ; and, lastly, the restoration to Parliament of its dignity and efficiency, and the regular progress of the business of the country."

It was noted by Lord Hartington that in this address of the Prime Minister there was not a word about the Land Bill, and Lord Hartington himself made no other remark about that measure, than that the landlords constituted only a small fraction of the classes which require protection, and he contended that the Protestants of Ulster needed it more. The addresses of the other Liberal leaders followed the example of Mr. Gladstone's, and those of the Liberal Dissentients, with the exception of Mr. Bright's, were brief reproductions of Lord Hartington's or of Mr. Chamberlain's. Mr. Bright refused to commit himself to any scheme of Home Rule, believing that no Irish Parliament could be as powerful and as just to Ireland as that at Westminster. It was still the policy of the Conservative chiefs to lie low. Lord Randolph Churchill, however, insisted on calling attention to himself, by the issue of perhaps the most abusive election address ever penned. It was a personal attack on Mr. Gladstone, and it is only possible to characterize it in the language it applied to the Home Rule Bill



as "a monstrous mixture of imbecility, extravagance and political hysterics," and as "a farrago of superlative nonsense." The world laughed at him rather than with him, though there were some who regarded him as the Conservative leader of the future. One expression, and one only, was remembered, not so much for its ill-mannered insolence as for the light it cast upon some cherished hopes of the less honourable of the Tory party. It was to the effect that the whole business had been precipitated "to gratify the ambition of an old man in a hurry." The Conservatives in many of the constituencies sympathized with Lord Randolph's violence, and the idea became popular with them to anticipate Mr. Gladstone's necessary removal from public life. There was nothing to sustain this hope but Mr. Gladstone's age, and the knowledge that it was entertained, created and sustained a lively reaction in Mr. Gladstone's favour in succeeding years.

The Prime Minister threw himself into the election campaign, with much of the elasticity and all the marvellous energy and zeal, with which he had fought the winning battles of 1880 and 1885. Just as he had set out from Edge Hill station on his first Mid Lothian campaign, and from King's Cross on his second, so, on the 17th of June he started from St. Pancras on the fifth campaign. The journey to the north by the Midland Railway took him through various political latitudes, but he was everywhere greeted with an enthusiasm such as even he had never witnessed before. He was obliged to make a brief speech to a Liberal crowd at St. Pancras station, and at Leicester, the multitude who wished to greet him had overwhelmed all barriers and perplexed the officials and alarmed Mr. Gladstone with fear of accident. At Trent, at Normanton, at Skipton, at Appleby, and at Carlisle the crowds insisted on hearing him speak, and he dropped a few words of advice on the burning question of the hour. At many of the stations at which the train did not stop, especially at Luton and Chesterfield, and many of the Yorkshire stations,

large numbers of people were waiting to catch a glimpse of him, and to give him a passing cheer. In the mining districts the people came out of their houses and waved their handkerchiefs, and passing engine-drivers and railway men made similar demonstrations as their trains rushed by. Over the Border the enthusiasm was even greater. At Hawick he had to speak from the lofty railway viaduct to the people who had gathered in dense masses far below to give him "a Border welcome." At Galashiels he made an address from a platform on the station wall; and the train then ran in to Edinburgh, where his drive through cheering crowds made even his opponents exclaim, "This looks as though Mr. Gladstone was going to win." He was, in fact, going to win along the way he had come, as well as in Scotland itself.

In his first speech in the Edinburgh Music Hall on the next day, the 18th, he said, "The Ministerial Bill is dead with the Parliament; the principle of the Bill survives," and he added, "I never will accept a new plan unless it be that it is better than the old one." Passing in review the unreal, halting, shambling, ever-shifting, ever-vanishing schemes of the Dissident Liberals, he declared that the only alternative to the Government policy was Lord Salisbury's twenty years of coercion. "Reflect in the name of Almighty God," he said, "in the sanctuary of the chamber, in the sanctuary of your heart and of your soul, what it is, in this year of 1886, after nearly a century of almost continuous coercion, becoming weaker, more and more odious, less and less effective as we go along, and repudiated now by the large majority of your representatives—reflect what it is to propose this, and only this, as an alternative to the policy of local government for Ireland." This was the chief burden of Mr. Gladstone's appeal, as it was of the appeal of the Liberal candidates everywhere. There is no middle way, we said. It is Lord Salisbury and perpetual coercion, or Mr. Gladstone and Home Rule.

To this effective presentation of the alternative, the Tory

leaders set themselves to reply. Lord Salisbury followed Mr. Gladstone as far as Leeds, and speaking there on the 18th of June, declared that his twenty years of resolute government, of government that did not flinch, meant only the resolute punishment of murder, robbery, and mutilation. He had not recommended political coercion. So said all his lieutenants. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach said, in his election address, "The rights of Ireland in this matter are neither more nor less than those of Great Britain. It should be our guiding principle to equalize, as far as possible, political privileges or disabilities throughout the United Kingdom"; but he denied that to prevent intimidation, backed by outrage and crime, was coercion. Mr. W. H. Smith said, "We are reproached that the only alternative is coercion. I deny that it is coercion to provide by legislation and by administration, that every Irishman shall be secured in the enjoyment of that individual freedom, which is the birthright of all the subjects of the Queen." Lord Iddesleigh told the Wolverhampton Tories at Patshull Park, "They say, 'there is nothing else for it, but you must propose coercion.' Nothing can be more untrue, nothing can be more entirely at variance with the real policy and views of the Conservative party, than either of those suggestions. We can neither tamper with Home Rulers, and the followers of Mr. Parnell, nor on the other hand can we look to coercion as the policy which we are to pursue. No, the true principles of Conservatives are, that we should conserve that which is handed down to us, that we should conserve that which binds the Empire together, that we should conserve the great principle of the legislative union with Ireland, and that we should endeavour to make our legislation such as may strengthen those bonds, and make them truly bonds of interest and affection. Coercion is the very last thing we desire. It is from coercion that we wish to save the people of Ireland."

It is quite possible to contend that the word "coercion" was used by these Conservative leaders in a double sense.



When Lord Iddesleigh said that coercion was the very last thing that they desired, he probably meant, and his audience certainly understood him to mean, coercive or repressive legislation ; but when he went on to say that they wished to save the people of Ireland from coercion, he meant the coercion of what he described as "that mischievous organization which makes every man's life in Ireland a burden to him." But there was no deceptive purpose—no mere desire to palter with public feeling—in this double use of the obnoxious word. The Conservative leaders persuaded themselves that they had dropped coercion, and were going to try conciliation. It was part of the policy of self-abnegation they had imposed upon themselves. They had to fight this election with their Liberal allies, and a sense of loyalty to them, made the Conservative leaders anxious to leave the way open to the adoption of that middle course, about which every Liberal Dissident was talking. Even Mr. Goschen—the nearest to them of all their Liberal supporters—believed that this middle course could be taken. In his election address he said, "Against the policy of a separate and uncontrolled Legislature and Executive in Ireland, the Unionists set the policy of the extension of local powers of self-government to that country, on lines applicable—subject to necessary modifications of detail—to England and Scotland as well. And this policy they believe can be carried out, without the fatal defects disclosed by the only scheme in which the Government have attempted to give effect to their principle." It was on the vague idea of this policy that the Coalition had been formed, and neither side had realized for itself, or formulated for the other, any of its details, or even its principles. The believers in coercion humoured the believers in conciliation, but kept open the retreat to their own infallible expedient if the other should fail ; the advocates of half a dozen different forms of local government were content to defeat the Ministerial proposal, and to leave the future to decide which of their own schemes should be put in its place. They were going to



carry everything before them ; to return to Parliament a hundred or a hundred and twenty strong ; and to settle the Irish difficulty in their own enlightened way. The Tories were quite willing to help them—and to bide their time. As Helena says in “All’s Well that Ends Well”—

Oft expectation fails, and most oft there  
Where most it promises ; and oft it hits,  
Where hope is coldest and despair most sits.

After another great speech in Edinburgh on the 21st of June, in which he humorously gave Mr. Goschen to the Tories, Mr. Gladstone went to Glasgow, where, on the 22nd, he addressed a great meeting of five thousand people in Hengler’s Circus. “Thirteen Reformed Parliaments,” he said, “these have been the measure of the years of your political life, and to every one of these Reformed Parliaments you have sent a majority of Reformers. What will you do now? Will you do the like again? Or will you, in Glasgow and elsewhere, have a Parliament made of Tories, or one made of gentlemen who, without meaning to be Tories, without calling themselves Tories, speak with Tories, act with Tories, and vote with Tories.” He had an immediate opportunity of pushing yet further this appeal against his Liberal antagonists. As soon as the Glasgow meeting was over Mr. Gladstone took the train for Hawarden. Arriving in the evening at Carlisle—where Mr. R. Ferguson, a Liberal who had voted against the Bill, was standing, with Mr. Gully, Q.C., as his Liberal opponent—there was a crowd on the platform who asked for a speech, and Mr. Gladstone made one. He had been reading Mr. Ferguson’s address. Mr. Ferguson promised him his support if he would adopt the principles of Lord Hartington. After humorously rallying Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Gladstone said, “I read in the papers that Mr. Leatham of Huddersfield, who strongly opposed our Bill, has retired from the contest for that borough because he does not choose to be returned by Tory votes. It appears

that Mr. Ferguson is not so particular." Mr. Ferguson thereupon retired, and Mr. Gully won the seat against a Tory candidate. The alternative thus put by Mr. Gladstone presented itself to nearly all the Liberal Dissentients. In almost every place the Liberal Associations rejected them. Lord Hartington was rejected by the Liberal organization in Rossendale by a large majority, and a Liberal candidate was hastily found to oppose him. Unlike Mr. Leatham and Mr. Ferguson, he did not object to be returned by Tory votes. Nor did Mr. Peter Rylands at Burnley, nor Mr. Courtney in the Bodmin division of Cornwall, nor Mr. Goschen in Edinburgh, though there their help was useless, nor Mr. Richard Chamberlain in West Islington, nor any of the other Liberals of the Coalition whose seats were contested. They were not to blame for accepting Tory aid. It was a necessity imposed upon them by an alliance which they regarded as a temporary one. They were only calling in the enemy to help them in a conflict with their political friends. They were going to defeat them, to impose terms upon them, and then to lead them. The Liberal host, defeated, discouraged, disillusioned, was to forsake its old and trusted leader and rally again under the revolted chiefs. With this conviction the Dissident leaders went, with their little groups of followers, into the Tory camp, with full determination that they would keep their Liberal principles untouched. They had no fear that the Tories would absorb them or enslave them; if there was to be absorption or enslavement it was they who would make the Tories their compliant friends or obedient followers. They were not recanting their Liberalism and joining the Tories, but the Tories were being regenerated and uniting with them. So the last step to Coalition was made; but made in a sort of blindness on both sides. The Liberal seceders went over with such an air of taking possession, that it was only with difficulty that the Tory leaders persuaded their followers to receive them. Neither side fully understood that the greater body would absorb

the less,—that the advantage must in the long run be with the side which contributed three-fourths of the Coalition, and that the new “Unionist” party would reverse Pope’s definition and exhibit the madness of the few for the gain of the many.

One of the influences which tended to hide this inevitable result from those who had reason to dread it most, was the condition of things in Birmingham, and in one or two other places. The question of accepting Tory votes did not come up to trouble the chief leaders of the Radical Union. Mr. Bright, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. George Dixon, Mr. William Kenrick, and Mr. Powell Williams were unopposed; and when the poll was taken in Bordesley, the only Birmingham division in which a Liberal Dissentient had to fight for his seat, Mr. Jesse Collings polled more than four to one. At Bury, Sir Henry James had no opponent. Lord Edward Cavendish in West Derbyshire, and eighteen others—making twenty-five out of the ninety-four—were thus allowed to walk over the course. Every one of these owed much, probably owed everything, to Conservative forbearance, but he, at least, escaped the humiliation of being returned by Tory votes. Fifty-one of the Dissentients found themselves opposed by Liberal candidates, and thirteen of these were defeated and thirty-eight found the advantage of the Coalition. Of fifteen who retired—three of them, Mr. Brand, Mr. Kitching, and Mr. Bickersteth, because the Tories would not have them—eight were succeeded by Tories, five by Liberals, and two by other Dissentient Liberals, while in two constituencies—the Romford division of Essex and the Torquay division of Devonshire—the local Conservatives not only refused to observe the compact on which the Coalition was based, but though the Liberal Dissentients went to the poll, their Tory allies inflicted hopeless defeat upon them. Of the ninety-four who voted against the Government, thirty-one disappeared from Parliament, only sixty-three went back to Westminster.



These results had only partially appeared when Mr. Gladstone spoke at Carlisle station. The oratorical debate was then at its height. Mr. John Morley, speaking first at Bradford and then to his own constituents at Newcastle, recalled attention to the Land Bill as an essential part of the Irish settlement, and reminded the country that the separate government for Ulster, of which Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Hartington were talking, would put the 400,000 Roman Catholics of that province under its 600,000 Protestants. Mr. Gladstone made a great speech at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on the 25th of June, and another at Liverpool on the 28th. Lord Hartington was equally active, speaking at Sheffield on the 28th of June and at Cardiff on the 30th; and Lord Salisbury addressed his followers on the 29th in St. James's Hall, making the curious admission—which confirmed all that Mr. Parnell and Mr. Justin McCarthy had said of Lord Carnarvon's negotiations—that he had told Lord Carnarvon he would never be a member of a government which accepted a proposal for Home Rule.

One, and only one, of the leaders whom the people trusted had not spoken. It was not till the 1st of July that Mr. Bright made a great speech to his constituents at Birmingham. There had been some doubt among ill-informed people as to his attitude. In the same papers which contained the report of this speech, a telegram from his son Mr. J. Albert Bright was printed, in which he said, "It is quite untrue that my father has promised to vote for a Home Rule candidate. I send this to stop a flood of letters and telegrams on the subject." Mr. Bright himself said that of all the questions which had come before Parliament and the country in the forty-five years he had been in public life, not one had come within a thousand miles of bringing the correspondence which this one had forced upon him. After expressing his regret at his estrangement from Mr. Gladstone, his distress at which had made him abstain as long as he could from interference in



the great controversy before them, he proceeded to attack both the Bills in his usual searching and unhesitating manner. He said the Irish difficulty was not political but altogether economical. "The landowners for the most part," he said, "are Protestants ; to a considerable part they are English, and it comes home to the population, 'If we could get rid of these proprietors the land would be ours, and if we could get them out of the country, the country would be ours.'" That was the movement that was going on, and among the bulk of those who had agitated, it was a movement against the ownership of land, in the hope of obtaining farms at a smaller rent, or at no rent, if the landowners could be expelled the country. We had now a new policy, partly political and partly economical ; the Government Bill was the political part and the Land Purchase Bill the economical. "It is not economical in the way of saving your money," he exclaimed, and continued, "I am against anything in any shape which shall be called a Parliament in Dublin, and I am against what I consider a most monstrous proposition, that is, the Bill for the purchase of the estates of Ireland. It is the political question which makes the economical question necessary. If it were not for a Bill like this, to alter the government of Ireland and to revolutionize it, no one would dream of this extravagant and monstrous proposition with regard to Irish Land. But if the political makes the economical necessary, the economical or Land Purchase proposition condemns the political proposition." Deducing from the Land Bill that the Government dared not leave the land and taxation in the hands of a Dublin Parliament, Mr. Bright went on to say, "Therefore the Land Bill invites us to risk a hundred and fifty millions of money to guarantee the landowners from a conspiracy which the Prime Minister has described as 'marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire.' Well, I am very sorry to be compelled to believe—I am sure that Mr. Gladstone honestly believes the contrary—but I am compelled to believe that

the legislation which he proposes is only another step forward in that march through rapine to the break-up of the United Kingdom, and the astounding proposition is that they are to dignify this conspiracy by the name, and the form, and the power of a Parliament." Mr. Bright then discussed the Land Bill, criticized severely the details of the Home Rule Bill, and repeated his own suggestion of making the Irish members a Grand Committee on Irish Bills. He concluded by an appeal "to try every one of the unexhausted resources of civilization, before we capitulate to one of the worst conspiracies that ever afflicted any country."

The effect of this violent speech was beyond all possibility of calculation.\* It was reported at full length in all the papers on the 2nd of July, when the borough elections had just fully begun. Mr. Gladstone wrote to Mr. Bright, pointing out the inaccuracy of his statements, especially his application of the phrase "marching through rapine to the break-up of the United Kingdom" to any existing conspiracy. In 1881 there had been such a conspiracy; there was no such conspiracy now, nor anything in any degree resembling it. Mr. Bright replied that it had been a great grief to him to speak as he did, but maintaining his position, and especially complaining of the ambiguity of Ministerial utterances with respect to the Land Bill. He concluded by saying that though he differed from Mr. Gladstone at this time, and on this question, he should

\* This is the result of my personal experience as Liberal candidate for North Islington, and of other Liberal candidates to whom I have spoken on the matter. Like most of them, I had repudiated the Land Bill, and had taken the Irish Government Bill in my hand in a rapid canvass of some of the chief Dissident Liberals, in a constituency in which they were influential and numerous. Going through the Bill with some of them clause by clause, I was able to answer all their objections, and in many cases to get their promise of support. Mr. Bright's speech, however, at once undid all my work. In the whole country it probably kept many thousands of Liberal voters from going to the poll, and did more than all the other influences put together, to produce the Liberal abstention which gave the Coalition its decisive victory.

never cease to admire his great qualities, or to value the great services he had rendered to his country.

The elections began on the 30th of June with the unopposed return of three Conservatives for three divisions of Liverpool. On the next day the polling began by the retention of a Tory seat at Colchester; and there was another group of unopposed returns. It was Friday, the 2nd of July, the day on which Mr. Bright's speech appeared, on which the first large group of borough elections was taken. A seat was won by the Liberals in Liverpool, one in Leith, one in Leeds, two at Manchester, and one at Carlisle; but these gains were exactly balanced by losses at Bristol, Falmouth, Hastings, Hereford, and two divisions of Salford. On Saturday the balance, which Friday had thus left on the poise, went down on the anti-Ministerial side. There were two gains to put in the scale of Home Rule; but nine to weigh down the Opposition scale. On Monday, the 6th of July, two more seats were won, but ten more were lost; on Tuesday the gains were four and the losses again ten; on Wednesday eight gains were scored, but thirteen losses overbalanced them; and on Thursday the gains were two and the losses four. On Friday there was a gain of one on each side, and on Saturday they were five to nine. The Liberal gains were now thirty and the losses sixty-one; so that the majority of thirty against the Irish Government Bill was raised to sixty-one. The total result of the appeal to the constituencies was that 194 Liberals were returned and 85 Nationalists, reducing the Home Rule Liberals from 313 to 279; and raising the 343 opponents and 14 neutrals to 391, of whom 316 were Conservatives and 75 were Dissident Liberals. Apart from these Liberal supporters the Tories had a majority of 37; the Coalition of the two wings raised the majority to 112; but a reunion of the whole Liberal party, with the Irish Nationalists still in alliance with them, would put the Tories in a minority of 38. The Dissident Liberals, therefore, now held the balance of power.



## CHAPTER VI.

*THE COALITION PARLIAMENT.*

THE result of the Election was not wholly satisfactory to either of the three English parties. The chief advantage remained with the Conservatives. They had gone to the constituencies only 249 strong and they had come back 316. The Irish Nationalists were in undiminished numbers ; the Liberals had lost heavily, but the Liberal Dissentients the most of all. Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues lost no time in recognizing the National decision. They did not wait for the return from far-distant Orcades, but at a dinner of nearly all the members of the Cabinet at Mr. Gladstone's house on Saturday, the 18th, and formally at a Cabinet Council on the 20th of July, determined on immediate resignation. The Queen, acting on her own independent view of the political situation, at once sent for Lord Salisbury. This was the natural interpretation of the meaning of the elections, but it showed at once the true position of the Unionist Liberals. It was the Queen's recognition of the Coalition. Nominally the new Parliament had a Liberal majority, and had it been a mere question of a modification of the Liberal policy and change in the leadership of the Liberal party, the Queen would have sent for Lord Hartington. It was on his motion that the late Government had been defeated ; it was he and his friends who had led the opposition to it in the elections, and the Liberals, of whom he still professed to be a leader, were, with the Nationalists, still a clear majority of the



House. But Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain were no longer to be regarded as Liberal leaders ; they were only the leaders of the small Liberal wing of a party, the great bulk of which consisted of Conservatives. Of a party to which the seceding Liberals brought only 75 and the Conservatives 316, the Conservative chief was the natural leader, and it was therefore to him that the Sovereign turned. In pursuance of his policy of keeping, or seeming to keep, in the background, Lord Salisbury had gone to Royat, and the Queen had to summon him thence. On his arrival he got permission from the Queen to ask Lord Hartington to form a Ministry. The suggestion may have been seriously made, but it could not be seriously entertained. Lord Hartington refused, on the ground that a Liberal leader could not be the head of what must practically be a Conservative government.

A Coalition government being thus out of the question, the alternative was a Conservative government supported by a Coalition majority. The first person to whom Lord Salisbury appealed was Lord Randolph Churchill, who came back in a hurry from fishing in Norway, drove from the railway station to Lord Salisbury's house in Arlington Street, and there and then accepted the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and the leadership of the House of Commons. The announcement of this appointment recalled to the minds of politicians the amusement with which they had heard, nineteen years before, of Mr. Disraeli's appointment, by the late Lord Derby, to the same office. With Mr. Disraeli, however, it was a step to the higher post of Prime Minister ; and might it not be the same with Lord Randolph Churchill ? So men who had laughed at the author of " Vivian Grey " being put in charge of the budget, restrained their amused amazement at the sudden elevation of another " Red Indian of debate." Another astounding appointment was that of Mr. Henry Matthews, the eminent advocate—a Roman Catholic Irishman who had represented Dungarvan as a Home Ruler under Mr. Butt's

leadership, but had won a seat from the Liberals at Birmingham in 1885, and who now became Home Secretary. Lord Iddesleigh became Foreign Secretary, Mr. Stanhope took the Colonies, Lord Cross, India, Mr. Balfour, the Secretaryship for Scotland, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Irish Secretaryship. Lord Halsbury, Lord Cranbrook, Mr. W. H. Smith, Lord George Hamilton, and Lord Ashbourne, returned to the places they had held in Lord Salisbury's former Administration, the Woolsack, the Presidency of the Council, the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Chancellorship of Ireland. Lord Stanley of Preston was President of the Board of Trade, and Lord John Manners, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. These fifteen formed the Cabinet. Mr. Raikes as Postmaster General, Lord Cadogan as Lord Privy Seal, and Mr. Ritchie as President of the Local Government Board, were not in the Cabinet. Mr. Chaplin was offered the Board of Trade, without a seat in the Cabinet. But Mr. Chaplin stood on his dignity. He would be a Cabinet Minister or nothing. The new Viceroy of Ireland was the Marquis of Londonderry, without a seat in the Cabinet. Sir Henry Holland was Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, as he had been when the year began; Mr. Plunket returned to his old post of First Commissioner of Works; and Sir Richard Webster to his former place as Attorney General. Sir Edward Clarke was Solicitor General; and Sir John Gorst took the Indian Under Secretaryship.

On the 27th of July, before the new Ministry was completed, Lord Salisbury summoned his Parliamentary followers to a Conference. They had won a surprising victory, and could hardly believe in the good luck by which they had so quickly overcome the dire calamity of the autumn. A hopeless minority in January had changed to a great majority in July. It was true that the majority was not homogeneous, but if its fate was in the hands of a group of Liberals, the fate of that group of Liberals was in the Tory keeping. Lord Salisbury's summons brought

more than three hundred sanguine Conservatives to the Carlton Club. Just six months before, a majority of seventy-nine had thrown them out of office, and here they were already back again. In such circumstances the management of a great party is child's play. Lord Salisbury told them of his urgent invitation to Lord Hartington, either to form a Cabinet or to co-operate with him in doing so, and of Lord Hartington's resolve to hold aloof and help them from outside. The meeting might have been less harmonious had Lord Salisbury been able to tell them that they were to put themselves under Lord Hartington's leadership. The feeling of the Tory party was that they had won the victory, and they must take the spoils. Lord Salisbury had to tell them that, though he had first offered all that they had gained to the allies through whom they had got it, it remained in their own hands. He had only then to tell them that Parliament must meet for a week or two now for the sake of Supply, and that then they would take a holiday till the new year was in. Everybody agreed, and though Mr. Raikes hinted that the Liberals would probably obstruct, and Colonel Tottenham wanted to know about the Coercion Bill so urgently needed on the 26th of January, the meeting left everything to Lord Salisbury to do what he liked and when.

On the day of the assembling of Parliament Lord Hartington held a meeting at Devonshire House of the Dissident Liberals who had seats in the new House of Commons. He congratulated them on the result of the appeal to the country, though it had reduced their own numbers, and they had to deplore the loss of Mr. Goschen, who had been defeated in Edinburgh, of Mr. (now Sir) G. Trevelyan, who had lost his seat at Hawick, of Mr. Brand, Mr. Albert Grey, Mr. Maude, and others. The Liberal Unionists now held the balance between parties instead of Mr. Parnell. It was in their power to prevent the return to office of a Liberal Government till Home Rule had been abandoned, but it was also in their power "to prevent a Conservative Govern-



ment from adopting a retrograde course, or from taking steps dangerous to the welfare of the country, either with regard to foreign policy or to unsound domestic legislation." He had declined the suggestion that he should try to form a government ; first, because it would make the breach in the Liberal party irreparable ; secondly, because a government resting on a large Conservative majority, even though it was headed by a Liberal and had a few Liberal members, must be virtually a Conservative government, and though the Conservative leaders were convinced of the necessity of a considerable advance from the position they formerly held, many of their supporters were not so convinced ; thirdly, had such a government been formed, many Liberal Unionists would have declined to support it, and thus division would have been caused in their ranks. They did not intend to cease to be Liberals, nor to give any ground for denying them that title. On many subjects they hoped still to co-operate with the rest of the Liberal party ; but they were not prepared to bring about the defeat of the present Government, which would involve another election, or the return to power of the Liberal party pledged to Home Rule. Mr. Chamberlain cordially accepted Lord Hartington as his leader, and proposed Mr. Caine as whip of the Dissident Liberals. They intended to take their old places on the Liberal benches, as a sign that they had in no way separated themselves from the Liberal party.

The new Parliament met on the 5th of August for the election of a Speaker and the swearing in of members. Mr. Peel was unanimously re-elected on the motion of Sir Edward Birkbeck, seconded by Mr. Gladstone, and it fell to Mr. Jackson's lot to offer him the usual Ministerial congratulations. The Ministerial re-elections led to only one contest. Mr. Richard Eve, who had fought the St. George's division of the Tower Hamlets against Mr. Ritchie in July, came forward again in August, but was defeated by an increased majority, due to the reluctance of the Liberal electors to poll. While the re-elections were proceeding, a



circular, dated on the 7th of August, was issued by the National Liberal Federation, calling the attention of the constituent associations "to the present position of the Liberal party and to the future action of the Federation." The object of this important manifesto was to define the attitude of the Liberal party towards Home Rule. "The supporters of half-measures for Ireland," it said, "are now the smallest group in Parliament. Despite the formidable coalition of forces against which he had to contend, Mr. Gladstone secured for his policy of conciliation the support of the vast majority of the Liberal electors of England, Scotland, and Wales, and of almost every Liberal organization in the United Kingdom. That 1,338,718 electors should have recorded their votes in favour of the establishment of a legislative body in Dublin for the management of Irish affairs, as against 1,416,472 for the Unionists and Tories combined, must be regarded as a striking proof of the strength of the popular desire for a permanent reconciliation between the peoples of Great Britain and Ireland." After expressing regret at the withdrawal of many men of influence from the Liberal ranks, the Address proceeded—"The Liberal party has now finally committed itself to the work of effecting a real union between England and Ireland, on the basis of the concession of the right of self-government to the Irish people. That task it can never abandon till the goal is reached. The Irish question occupies the first place in the politics of the day. No government, no Parliament, no party will be able to ignore it. Until it has been settled, no progress can be made with the ordinary work of the Liberal party, nor will it be possible for the Conservatives to indulge in a congenial inactivity while this problem remains unsolved. It is one of those 'unfinished questions' which have no pity for the repose of nations." After repudiating the pretensions of the dissentient minority to impose their views on the majority, the Address set forth some of the other matters—among them the condition of the agricultural labourers and the laws affecting

registration and electoral machinery—which in the view of the Liberal party were urgent. In conclusion, the officers of the Federation said that though Mr. Gladstone had suffered temporary defeat in a great and noble struggle, a defeat inflicted by the hands of friends, he had the satisfaction of knowing that his policy had received the support of the overwhelming majority of his party, that it still lived and was assured of ultimate triumph. This manifesto was signed by Sir James Kitson (President), Sir Walter Foster (Chairman of Committee), Mr. W. H. Hart (Treasurer), Mr. F. E. Anthony, for the Plymouth Liberal Association; Mr. E. Clephan, Leicester; Mr. E. Gripper, Nottingham; Mr. Mathers, Leeds; Mr. H. J. Roby, Manchester; Mr. Matthew Robertson, Cambridge; Professor Stuart, for Hull; Mr. Charles Townsend, Bristol; Dr. Spence Watson, Newcastle-on-Tyne; Mr. Schnadhorst (Secretary), and Mr. R. A. Hudson (Assistant Secretary).

This manifesto merely placed on record obvious and acknowledged facts. The result of the General Election was to establish Home Rule as the accepted policy of the Liberal party. An immense majority of the Liberals had voted for it, and of those who had not been able to go with their political friends in adopting it, the greater part had hesitated and refused to vote at all. The section which had gone over to the other side and had voted for the Tory candidates was but small, and even the Dissident Liberals who had been returned in spite of opposition by other Liberal candidates, had carried with them but a small proportion of their former supporters. The coalition was made by the officers of the Liberal army, not by its privates; by the leaders, not by the led. In many constituencies a small body of men calling themselves Liberal Unionists had formed themselves into a separate association, which worked in seeming independence of the Conservatives; but except at Birmingham, the Liberal Unionist Associations seldom or ever caused a very serious diminution in the number of the Liberal electors. It is impossible to under-

stand the course of political events in succeeding years unless this fact is kept in mind. It was the abstention of hesitating Liberals, not the coalition of Liberals with the Tories, which caused the Liberal defeat. A few Liberals everywhere went over. There was actually a secession, but, except at Birmingham, the number of the seceders was small. The great bulk of the Liberals who did not go to the poll were waverers, who could not vote with their party, but would not vote against it, and who gradually returned to active co-operation and full political sympathy, as soon as they realized that the Coalition really meant that Liberals must vote for Tory candidates, support a new Coercion Act, and keep a Tory Government in power.

Neither the Conservatives nor the Liberal group who had placed them in power realized at first what the true state of political parties was. Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain were hopeful that the Liberal party would come over to them, and even the Conservatives thought the election had taught their defeated opponents that Home Rule was hopeless. On the 11th of August Lord Salisbury went to the Mansion House to the yearly banquet to Her Majesty's Ministers. He was in the highest spirits, but quite conscious of the difficulty and responsibility of his position. Last year he had prophesied that next time the toast was proposed, a Conservative Prime Minister would be there to acknowledge it. His friends were then inclined to accuse him of unnecessary bravado, but the improbable had happened, and a Conservative Prime Minister was now again returning thanks for the toast. He congratulated London on its Conservatism, shown now in two general elections, and told the City its privileges were in no danger from the great communities that surrounded it. On the Irish question—"the skeleton in our cupboard," "the painful subject of contemplation," as he called it—he contended that the Government had "a mandate from the people of this country, deciding, and, in my belief, finally and irrevocably deciding, the question which has wrecked



the peace of the neighbouring island." He continued—"The question of an independent government for Ireland has been referred to the only tribunal that can determine it with authority, and determine it without appeal. It has been referred to that tribunal after long and painful discussion, upon the authority of the most powerful statesman this century has seen." It had been, under these circumstances, submitted to the people of this country, and they had given an answer which in itself was emphatic and unequivocal, but which was even more emphatic and unequivocal than it seemed at first sight, because the minority had been led, not by a sense of the justice of the reply they had given, but by the personal influence of Mr. Gladstone. So the Prime Minister persuaded himself and his hearers that the decision at the election was "the final verdict of the English people"; and said that, "armed with this decision," the Government would restore social order in Ireland, a hint of coercion at which many of his Liberal supporters winced.

The hint was not yet to be followed up. Urgent as a Coercion Bill had been on the 26th of January, reluctant as the Conservatives in the House of Commons had been to entertain estimates for civil establishments in Ireland, till Mr. Gladstone had declared what he would do for social order in that country, and ready for such legislation as Lord Salisbury still seemed to be on the 11th of August, he had seen reasons for deliberation and delay before Parliament reassembled on the 19th of that month. The Queen's Speech did not mention social order in Ireland. Parliament, it said, had been summoned at this unusual season for "indispensable business," but the "indispensable business" was only the voting of money. The result of the appeal to the country had been to confirm the conclusion with regard to the government of Ireland to which the late Parliament had come; and as all that was now needful was to pass the necessary financial measures, no others would be brought forward. The first division was



taken by Mr. Bradlaugh on a proposal, which Sir Wilfrid Lawson seconded, not to renew the Sessional Order against the interference of Peers in elections. The motion was described by Mr. Gladstone "as in the nature of laying the first parallel in the siege which will some time or other be laid to the House of Lords." It was defeated, and the Sessional Order affirmed by 294 to 126. In the arrangements for seconding the Address, the Coalition was recognized and the Liberal element in it given its natural place. The Address was moved by Colonel King-Harman and seconded by Mr. John Maclean. Mr. Maclean plunged into the Irish controversy, contended that the defeat of Home Rule was final and irrevocable, and expressed the opinion that even Mr. Gladstone would never propose Home Rule again. This was the tone of all the Dissident Liberals. One of them wrote a letter to the papers in which he said that Mr. Gladstone should retire into private life, and that when he did so the Liberal division would be healed. In replying to Mr. Maclean, Mr. Gladstone said, expressing the conviction of the whole party in the House and in the country, that all that had happened, instead of weakening, had confirmed his strong belief in the main principles of the Home Rule measure. He congratulated the Government on the absence from the Speech of any hint of coercive legislation for Ireland, but urged that they should lose no time in announcing their Irish policy. "We approach in November," said Mr. Gladstone, "a great and important period of the payment of rents in Ireland. The circumstances of the harvest are uncertain. Though a good crop is in the ground, the actual weather prognostications do not allow us to form the most sanguine anticipations, at any rate the most certainly sanguine anticipations, as to what may happen. We know the opinion which prevails in Ireland, that of, at all events, a large portion of the community, that in consequence of the changes in agricultural values there is a great difficulty in maintaining the judicial rents. I am not qualified to

give an opinion on that subject myself, and I give no opinion. What I wish to impress is that we have at this present moment a season singularly favourable in Ireland for dealing with any real political exigency in that country, and that we should lose all our advantage were we to pass into a different state of things with regard to the payment of rent. Were there to be anything like a general resistance, any revival of the doctrines hostile to rent, under the influence of the passing circumstances of the moment, an immense addition would be made to the complications of this question ; and it is extremely desirable, as it appears to me, to forestall those complications."

The Government did not forestall those complications. The warning passed unheeded. Lord Randolph Churchill, in reply to Mr. Gladstone's question as to what change had occurred in the social state of Ireland, said that a great change had occurred, for Mr. Gladstone had put himself at the head of the Nationalist party. As to the warning of difficulties about rent, it should not have been given. The Government meant to treat social order as a distinct question, and they would ask for further powers if they wanted them ; as to the land, they would do nothing ; as to local government, they wished to treat it as a question for the United Kingdom as a whole. There was disorder in Kerry and the surrounding districts, but Sir Redvers Buller was going to look after the South and West ; a Royal Commission on the working of the Land Acts was to be appointed, and a second Royal Commission on the resources of Ireland, to report how those resources could best be developed. In February the Government would be prepared with definite proposals on Local Government. "The great sign-posts of our policy," he said, "are equality, similarity, and, if I may use such a word, simultaneity of treatment, so far as this can possibly and practicably be obtained, for the development of a genuinely popular system in all the four countries which compose the United Kingdom." In the Lords, Lord Salisbury, replying to a

speech by Lord Granville, took a similar tone. He not only insisted that the Government had a mandate from the country to sustain the Union, but that their duty was to give their efforts, above everything else, to the restoration of social order and the maintenance of legal rights. Like Lord Randolph Churchill's speech, this speech of Lord Salisbury's was regarded as a notice to the landlords that their friends were in power, and that they were to be aided in carrying out evictions and enforcing the full payment of rents, whether the tenants could pay or could not. Sir William Harcourt insisted that the Government could not treat the question of social order by itself, but must deal with it by removing the grounds on which the social disorder rested. The Government were practically telling the landlords to exact the uttermost farthing of rent.

On the third evening of the debate Sir Michael Hicks-Beach repudiated this interpretation of Lord Salisbury's and Lord Randolph Churchill's words, but he afterwards said the same thing in a different way. He added some information as to the objects of the two Royal Commissions. The Government, he said, wanted to put an end to the interminable system of reports coupled with inaction. Lord Hartington took up the defence of the Government and said that their language had been misinterpreted. He thought it was undoubtedly a time when the rights of landlords, "even if those rights have been recently ascertained and to a certain extent guaranteed under State interference," should be exercised with forbearance and moderation. At the same time the Government was obliged to make use of its power in defence of legal rights. Individuals had a right to appeal to the law, and "it was not in the power of this or any government to raise itself as a dispensing power to override the legal rights of any class of her Majesty's subjects." The late Chief Secretary had been accused of claiming this power, but it had been denied in both Houses that any such claim had been made. Lord Hartington concluded his speech by assuring Sir William Harcourt that



if the policy of the late Government was founded on justice and on reason, that policy would ultimately prevail. Mr. John Morley spoke in full appreciation of the position Lord Hartington had conscientiously taken up ; but saw little in his speech to encourage hope for Ireland. He was amazed at the disposition which existed to divorce the question of social order from that of the land. One of the new Royal Commissions was to inquire whether or not there had been such a fall in agricultural prices as to justify a reduction of rents. The effect would be to make it the interest of the landlord to extort the uttermost farthing from his tenants, in order to prove that rents were not too high. The tenants on the other hand would have an equal interest in not paying their rents, so that the Commissioners might be led to suppose that the rents needed revision. "I said, early in my official life," continued Mr. Morley, "that it was much to be regretted that there was not a power of discriminating as to whether tenants could or could not pay. Since that time, I have taken a good deal of trouble to ascertain whether it was not possible that some such discriminating power could be introduced. I did find that there were judicial authorities which could deal with such cases ; and I do hope the Government will see whether something cannot be done in that direction. Unless they do something they will run great risks that within a certain number of months there will undoubtedly be the peril of grave local disturbance."

This view of the necessity of doing something in restraint of cruel evictions was further urged by Mr. Parnell, who resumed the debate in moving an amendment to the Address on the 24th of August. This amendment raised the whole question of the distress in Ireland. It put into a clause, which Mr. Parnell proposed to add to the Address, the substance of the warning given by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. John Morley. "We fear," it said, "that owing to the heavy fall in the price of agricultural produce, the greatest difficulty will be experienced in the course of the coming



winter by the Irish tenant farmers in the payment of their present rents, and many will be unable to pay those rents ; that numerous evictions, confiscating the rights vested in the tenants by the Land Act of 1881, causing widespread suffering, and endangering the maintenance of social order, will be the result ; that we deprecate any attempt to transfer the loss, due to inability to pay the present rents, from the owners of land to the taxpayers of Great Britain and Ireland by any extension of State-aided purchase, on the basis of rents fixed when prices were higher than they are now." This fall in the value of agricultural products, which was embarrassing English farmers, and leading considerate landlords all over England, Wales and Scotland to make voluntary reductions in their rents, or voluntary returns to the tenants of a quarter, a third, or even half their payments, was causing the utmost anxiety to Irish tenants. Their inability to pay the judicial rent might be taken advantage of by an unscrupulous landlord to deprive them of the fixity of tenure and the right to sell the succession to their holding, which the Act of 1881 had given them. In his amendment to the Address Mr. Parnell—the Cassandra of Irish politics, as Mr. W. A. Macdonald called him in a forcible maiden speech—gave another of the warnings which were only heard too late. Mr. Gladstone, after an undignified and fruitless effort by Lord Randolph Churchill to prevent him from reviewing the policy of the Government, supported Mr. Parnell's contention, though not his amendment to the Address. Mr. T. W. Russell urged that the difficulty was real, but supported the Government in making it at present only the subject of inquiry. The Tory papers asserted day by day that there was no ground for saying that the fall in agricultural prices affected the power of the tenants to pay their rents, and some supporters of the Government in the House of Commons said the same thing. Mr. Chaplin, who contended that the prospective fall in prices had been allowed for when the judicial rents were fixed, rejoiced in

the prospect of the failure of the Act of 1881, and said that if the tenants could not pay their rents the landlords should get back their land. Mr. Chamberlain supported the Government, and the division—181 for the amendment and 304 against it—showed the coalition between the Liberal and Tory wings of its supporters to be as *The Times* described it, "unbroken and effective."

While this discussion was proceeding, Mr. Gladstone issued a pamphlet on the Irish Question. He had sent out "A Chapter of Autobiography" in 1868 to explain his attitude towards the Irish Church Establishment, and to repel the attempt to assail a cause in the person of its advocate. "The same motive," said Mr. Gladstone, "now obliges me to repeat the act, and will, I hope, form a sufficient excuse for repeating it." The new pamphlet was therefore another Chapter of Autobiography, and its first part, "The History of an Idea," told the story of the rise of the Home Rule movement for half a century, and its progress till it had become a legislative question. There were six conditions under which, when they were realized, Home Rule might be entertained. These were: (1) The final surrender of the hope that Parliament could so far serve as a legislative instrument for Ireland, as to keep the relations between the two countries friendly. (2) The unequivocal expression of the wish of the Irish people. (3) The restriction of the demand within limits of safety for the Empire. (4) The dealing with Ireland on principles applicable to Scotland "in circumstances of equal and equally clear desire." (5) The duty of not making it a party measure; and (6) Prompt dealing with the question when it became urgent. Mr. Gladstone contended that, from first to last, in every step he had taken, these principles had been kept in view.

The second part of the pamphlet was "The Lesson of the Election," first, as it affected the Liberal party; second, as it bore on Ireland. It began significantly—"The satisfactory adjustment of the Irish question will now, I

apprehend, be the supreme object of every member of the Liberal party who has embraced its prevailing sentiment at the present crisis." As to the schism in the Liberal party, Mr. Gladstone estimated the seceders as very slightly exceeding two-sevenths of the whole. The split, however, divided classes very unequally. Five-sixths of the Liberal Peers had gone, and perhaps four-sixths of the employers; but not more than a twentieth of the working men. The Liberal votes were 300,000 more than the Tory votes, and came within 76,000, or four per cent. of the Tory and Dissident Liberal votes put together; so that whenever the Liberal party was reunited it would again become predominant in Parliament. There was therefore nothing in the recent defeat to abate the hopes of Ireland. The Land Bill was the chief cause of the Liberal overthrow; but the sentence which had gone forth for its severance from the Home Rule Bill was irresistible, and the twinship which had been for the time disastrous, existed no longer. Finally, Mr. Gladstone pointed out that the Repeal of the Test Acts in 1828, Catholic Emancipation in 1829, the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, and the extension of the Franchise in 1867, had all been carried out by the Tory party, which had resisted them up to the very moment preceding the surrender. His offer of help to Lord Salisbury's Government in the previous December was due to the conviction that, had the Tory party so acted as to Home Rule, it would, as in 1829 and 1846, have been able to rely on enough Liberal votes to make up for Tory defections and secure the accomplishment of the great design.

Various amendments to the Address raised important discussions, but all were defeated—Mr. S. Smith's against the War in Burmah, Mr. W. R. Cremer's against all War, Dr. Clark's in behalf of the Scotch Crofters, and Mr. Sexton's on Social Order in Belfast. On the Report of the Address, Mr. Labouchere moved an amendment rebuking Lord Randolph Churchill for his violent speeches in Belfast, and



this too was rejected by a majority of 83. An important discussion was raised by Mr. Molloy, in Committee of Supply on the Army Estimates, on the supply of warlike stores to the Army and Navy. There had been much agitation in the press with respect to guns that burst, bayonets which bent, and cartridges that jammed. As to rations and medicines, the Secretary for War admitted the truth of Mr. Bradlaugh's charge that in the Egyptian campaign these things did not arrive in time. Of bayonets, twenty-one and a half per cent. of those tested were found to be too soft. Sir Frederick Wygram said that the saddles supplied showed bad manufacture, bad supervision, and a hopelessly incompetent inspector of saddlery. Sir John Commerell said that on the China station a short time ago a fifty-four-pounder having burst, the Admiralty at once ordered that no guns bearing the same mark should be fired again. Half the guns on his station were thus laid aside. The Admiralty, however, were not responsible for the guns supplied to the Navy. "We want Home Rule in the Navy," said Sir John Commerell. Mr. W. H. Smith did not promise Home Rule in the Navy, but he promised a judicial Committee with the object of providing a complete answer as to the doings of the Ordnance Department, and with that promise the House of Commons was content. A small reform of another kind was accomplished by the passing of a Bill discontinuing the annual payment out of the Consolidated Fund of £10,000 for Secret Service Money.

The most momentous debate of the Session arose on Mr. Parnell's Tenants' Relief Bill. After the Address had been voted, Mr. Dillon earnestly asked the House of Commons to pass some measure of relief for Irish agricultural distress. What was needed was help for the coming winter—it would be too late in the spring. Sir William Harcourt backed up the appeal; but Sir M. Hicks-Beach did not see the necessity for doing anything. Mr. Parnell thereupon expressed the hope that the Government would give him



an opportunity of bringing in a Bill for enabling leaseholders to apply for the fixing of judicial rents for their leaseholds, for allowing tenants whose judicial rents had been fixed before the end of 1884 to apply for revaluation on the basis of current prices, and for giving the Courts power to stay evictions on the payment of three-fourths of the original rent. Lord Randolph Churchill promised to find a day for the discussion, and it seemed for a brief moment as though a golden opportunity for a healing policy in Ireland would actually be taken. On the 9th of September Lord Leitrim moved a resolution in the House of Lords, which he withdrew as only thirty peers were present, in favour of giving leaseholders access to the Land Courts. In the early morning of the 11th Mr. Parnell brought in his Bill. It consisted of three clauses. The preamble set forth that, having regard to the great fall in the prices of agricultural produce since many of the judicial rents of tenants' holdings were fixed, it was expedient to make temporary provision for the relief of the tenants of such holdings, and to provide for the admission of certain leaseholders to the benefits of the Land Act of 1881. The tenants' relief was given by two clauses, one of which provided that a tenant, whose judicial rent was fixed prior to the 31st of December, 1884, might apply to the Land Court for abatement of rent, provided that he had paid one-half of the rent and arrears, and that he was unable to pay the remainder "without loss of his holding, or depreciation of the means necessary for the cultivation and stocking thereof." The other clause provided that proceedings for the recovery of rent should be stayed until the application had been disposed of. The clause respecting leaseholders limited the application of the Bill to certain classes of leases.

The introduction of this Bill recalled to most minds the crisis in 1880, in which Mr. Forster had declared that cruel evictions must be stayed, and had brought in and carried through the House of Commons a Bill giving tenants in certain hard cases Compensation for Disturbance in

their tenancy; or, in other words, compensation for the rights of which eviction robbed them. The throwing-out of that measure by the Lords was the cause and origin of Mr. Forster's difficulties, and of all the confusion and unrest of the succeeding years. But those six years, it was hoped, had brought a change. The Government had actually acknowledged that a great difficulty had arisen, for they had appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into it and to report upon it. The winter would be upon the tenants, with the November rents, which they could not pay, falling into arrear, and something should be done to tide them over the period of waiting for the Report of the Commission and the action to be based upon it. It was even rumoured that Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Matthews had induced the Cabinet to regard Mr. Parnell's proposals with favour, and that only Lord Hartington and his group of Liberal Dissentients stood in the way. Lord Randolph Churchill gave strong confirmation to the impression that the new Government was disposed to adopt a conciliatory policy, by a brief but very significant speech in the House of Commons on the 15th of September. In that speech, he assured the House that the Chief Secretary and his Irish colleagues had listened, with the utmost attention and patience, to everything put forward by the Irish members, and that it was their desire, and the desire of the other members of the Government, that all reasonable grievances which it was in the power of the Government to remedy should receive close attention, "and, if possible, the most speedy remedy." He thought that the functions of the Board of Works and the Local Government Board called for the most careful consideration from the Government, with a view to their development, so far as might be, in accordance with Irish ideas and desires. It was the decided intention of the Government to make proposals to Parliament at the earliest opportunity, which he hoped might be next Session. The object of those proposals would be to place the control of all those questions in

the hands of the Irish people. Of course, that would be done within the limits fixed by the verdict of the constituencies at the last elections, limits which the Government had neither the wish nor the power to overstep. The Government desired to act honestly, and at the same time practically, in this matter. This important declaration had been preceded by some similar statements by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who had said it was universally admitted that they ought to endeavour to extend a system of local government in Ireland as in other portions of the United Kingdom. The Chief Secretary thus admitted the obligation, and the First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House pledged the Government to act upon it. Nothing could be more definite than the pledge thus made—a pledge given on behalf of the Government by its chief representative in the House of Commons, and tacitly accepted without modification and without hesitation by all his colleagues in the Ministry.

It was in these hopeful circumstances and with this emphatic pledge and promise full in mind that on the 20th of September, a Government night, Mr. Parnell moved the second reading of his Bill. He showed that the fall in prices was twenty per cent., and that the Land Courts were now recognizing it, for whereas before the beginning of 1886 the rents they fixed were nine per cent. above the Poor Law valuation, this year they were nine and a half per cent. below it. The Government left it to Mr. Penrose Fitzgerald and Mr. C. E. Lewis to move and second the rejection of the Bill, but the Irish Solicitor-General opposed it, on the ground that the Government could not take up new constructive legislation in that Session, and that the Bill would only affect 100,000 tenants. Mr. Gladstone, regretting that, in spite of rumours of agreement, no signs of agreement were apparent, supported the second reading, reserving his freedom as to details. He contended that no Government would issue a Royal Commission to inquire into the ability of tenants to pay their rents unless they had



reason to believe there were some who could not pay them. The Commission therefore contained an assertion and involved a promise, the assertion of a need and a promise of relief. The relief, he thought, should be given at once.

Mr. Matthews opposed the Bill on the ground that it would take years to settle all the applications under it, and meanwhile the landlords would lose half their rents; and Mr. John Morley, who opened the discussion on the next night, replied that objections to the details of the Bill might easily be removed in Committee. Lord Hartington opposed the Bill as depriving the landlord of his remedy for the recovery of rent. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach also opposed the Bill in what Sir William Harcourt characterized as a "tone of defiance and menace." Sir William Harcourt said, in reply to Lord Hartington, "I remember the story of a conversation in which the Head of the Holy Roman Empire was discussing matters with a Liberal politician, and in the course of which he observed, 'I am a Royalist; it is my profession.' The noble lord is a landlord; it is his profession." But where were his friends? "At the fall of the year he sits there very much like 'the last rose of summer.' There is no doubt one 'lovely companion' by his side (this was Mr. Heneage), but the others are mostly 'faded and gone.'" Where was Sir Henry James, where was the voice of Birmingham? "We have heard one voice from the Treasury Bench, but at Birmingham 'We are seven.' Where are the six? It reminds me of the constellation of seven stars, the Pleiades, in which there is occasionally a star missing. In the Birmingham constellation there are several bright particular stars missing to-night. Where is the senior member for Birmingham, the great champion in former days of impoverished tenants? Has he come to the conclusion that force is the only remedy? There is another member for Birmingham absent to-night, my right honourable friend who, a few months ago, proposed as the only and necessary remedy for Ireland the suspension of evictions. Where is:



he, and what has become of that eminent body the Radical Union? There is another member, the hero of 'three acres and a cow,' the friend of the poor tenant all over the world; and when I ask where is he? I am reminded of a celebrated apostrophe of Lord Chatham—'Gentle shepherd, tell me where?' Birmingham, that used to array the Liberal and Radical opinion of England on this great and critical question, what is the voice of Birmingham? Why, Birmingham speaks with one voice, and the voice of Birmingham is the voice of a Tory Minister." When Sir William Harcourt sat down Mr. Dillon wound up the debate by an earnest appeal, concluding with the significant words—"I have brought forward this Bill in conjunction with my leader, the honourable member for Cork, in honesty and good faith, and if this House denies us the justice we ask, I shall go back to Ireland and tell the tenants they have nothing to trust to but their own exertions, and as long as I have life and liberty, as long as the Government leaves me that liberty, I will tell the people of Ireland to continue in that course of persistent and determined resistance by which they have wrung every single concession which has been granted to them in the past, and by which, in the future, if they only show perseverance enough, they will win, in spite of the Irish landlords—aye, in spite of the House of Commons, their right to live as free men in their own land." The House then divided and the Bill was rejected by 297 to 202—a majority of 95. Four days later the Session was brought to a close.

## CHAPTER VII.

*THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.*

THE recess which followed the first Session of the Coalition Parliament brought very little political repose. No party was altogether at its ease, and each seemed to be waiting for the next move of the others. The defeated Liberals were rallying their forces and reconstituting their organizations ; the victorious Conservatives were perplexed with the changes in their policy, and the possible confusion in their ranks, which their dependence on a group of revolting Whigs and Radicals might produce, and the Dissentients themselves were full of uncertainty as to what might be before them in the future. Early in the recess, there were signs which seemed to indicate the probability of the changes in the policy of their party, which many Tories dreaded. On Saturday, the second of October, Lord Randolph Churchill addressed a large open air meeting of Kentish Conservatives at Dartford. It was held to celebrate the return, by the nineteen constituencies of the county, of an unbroken phalanx of supporters of the Government—eighteen Tories and one Dissident Liberal. All the Conservative Associations were represented, and a long file of deputations brought addresses to the Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons, who was regarded as the future chief of the Conservative party. It had been hinted beforehand that Lord Randolph would make an important speech, and might sketch the legislative programme of the Tory Govern-

ment. It was expected that the new Conservative policy would show traces of Liberal influence. All the Liberal Dissentients had been telling the world, partly to persuade themselves and partly to influence their allies, that though the members of the Government were Conservatives, its supporters were a mixed body of Liberals and Tories, and that the Liberal leaven would work in the Tory lump till the whole was leavened. Lord Randolph Churchill was expected to show at Dartford how far the leavening had gone. He knew what was expected of him, and in spite of a chilling breeze which made many of his audience shiver, he held them with unbroken voice and unfailing energy for an hour and twenty minutes. The matter more than even the manner of his speech held them spell-bound. The Tories had never heard the like before. It was as fascinating to them to hear Liberalism talked by a Tory chief, as it is to fashionable congregations to hear heresy preached as the latest form of orthodoxy. They had never listened to a Radical speech before, and as it came in no questionable shape, they took it for the newest Toryism. The old members of the party shook their heads, the popular section threw up their hats and clapped their hands. The Tory papers on Monday—with a single exception—adopted the new programme at once. The Radical supporters of the Tory Government proclaimed the political millennium. This was what the new Coalition could do. Mr. Chamberlain and his friends had conquered the Tory party and were leading them captive.

The speech was one of the most audacious ever made by a man in the position of a statesman. There was scarcely a point in the Radical programme which the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer did not appropriate and adopt. He began by congratulations on the Tory victory and on the support the Unionist Liberals had given to the Government. In forty-three divisions they had had majorities averaging a hundred. The Government had appointed four Royal Commissions because they were “determined

to legislate only upon ascertained facts." Two of these were for Ireland, one to inquire into the Land Law, the other "to investigate the capacity of Irish resources for their development by public works on a remunerative scale and by the support of public credit." Then as to the rest of the United Kingdom. The Government wanted to know how far the long commercial and agricultural depression might have been influenced, or caused, or affected by the change in the relative value of the precious metals—a hint at which the Kentish rustics cheered and the Lancashire bi-metallists lifted up their heads. Then came the old Liberal policy of Retrenchment. They had appointed a Royal Commission "to inquire into the scale and cost of our system of government in this country," and they wanted to see whether they got their money's worth, and whether they could not make considerable reductions and simplifications in the expenditure. The Procedure of the House of Commons was next to be reformed by the adoption of closure by a simple majority, as the Liberals had proposed. The promises to the agricultural labourers were then to be redeemed, by the provision of facilities "through the operation of local authorities for the acquisition by the agricultural labourers of freehold plots and allotments of land." Glebes were to be used for these purposes, and tithes were to be dealt with. "Let the landlords pay them," shouted a farmer. "I will tell the gentleman in the crowd what the views of the Government are," said Lord Randolph, and after some beating about he came round to the assurance that the Government policy would "tend in the direction intimated rather hastily by my friend in the crowd." Railway rates were to be reduced; a cheaper mode of land transfer was to be set up, and a "genuinely popular form of local government" to be established in the counties. The incidence of local taxation was to be altered, and personal property made to pay "a far more equal share than it now does in the expenses of local government." On the Licensing question he believed it



possible that local bodies would be able to settle most of the difficulties; "at any rate, I think that the time has come," he said, "when, by an agreement of all parties—except enthusiasts and fanatics—a real and genuine move forward can be made." Then came a point bearing on the office he had the honour to hold. "My own special object," he said, "to which I hope to devote whatever energy, strength, or influence I may possess, is to endeavour to attain some genuine and considerable reduction of public expenditure and consequent reduction of taxation."

Having thus sketched, he said, "a programme more than sufficient for one session of Parliament," he went on further. There were the Irish Land Laws, "recently modified and reformed in an impulsive manner," now to be so changed as to produce peace. "A system of popular local government in Ireland" must be established, and this question "no Government and no party can afford to shirk." Popular education was being inquired into by a Royal Commission, and when that Commission reported the Government would act. There were signs of a revival of trade, which would soon react on the agricultural interest, and "if we can only restore some measure of prosperity and activity to our manufacturing towns you will have almost immediately a great demand for, and a great consumption of, agricultural produce." There were, indeed, two clouds on the horizon, the social condition of Ireland and Foreign relations. But he hoped Irish landlords would not "have recourse to harsh or unjust evictions," or "exact rents which, from one cause or another, it may be impossible to pay." As to Foreign matters "the sympathy of England with liberty and with the freedom and independence of communities and nationalities is of ancient origin, and has become the traditional direction of our foreign policy." Such was the programme of the Government in the autumn of 1886, as sketched by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Gathorne Hardy, in moving a vote of thanks to Lord Randolph for his speech, proclaimed him

as the natural successor of Lord Beaconsfield, and Mr. Bazley White, Tory member for Gravesend, believed Lord Randolph Churchill's mission to be as great and serious as that undertaken by the greatest statesmen since Pitt, and the greatest statesmen of that day. The Fourth Party, said this enthusiastic convert, "has often been the subject of scoffing and laughter, but it is remarkable to notice that, in the present Parliament, it has become the instrument of a great and gigantic Tory democracy."

Such was the aspect which public affairs presented to the sanguine youth of the Tory party. How they appeared to the venerable leader of the Liberals was shown in the papers of the succeeding day. On the fourth of October five deputations went to Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden, one of which—formed chiefly of Irish ladies, headed by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Dublin—bore an address signed by five hundred thousand of the women of Ireland. The other four were headed by the Mayors of Clonmel, Cork, Limerick, and Waterford, conveying to him certificates of the freedom of their respective cities, enclosed in caskets of Irish manufacture. Mr. Gladstone received the deputations in his library, and in his speech in response to their congratulations reviewed the position of the Irish question. Referring to the agitation which was being carried on by the Dissident Liberals, he said: "There are those who think that my withdrawal would tend to bring about a satisfactory settlement. I have not been able to see that, but at the same time, if I did see it, I tell you frankly that I would act upon it." After passing in review the history of the Union, of Irish protests and efforts and of the Home Rule Bill in the late Parliament, Mr. Gladstone turned to the Dissident Liberals. The defeat of the Government was their doing, and "no greater triumph was ever achieved by a small party. That is in the past; when I think of their future it does not appear to me to be so satisfactory." The first article of their creed was that they were Liberals. But the general principle of

Liberalism was trusting the nation—they had adopted as their guiding principle mistrust of the nation. "Some persons," he continued, "think they have the balance of power; but they have told us that they feel bound to support a Tory Government, not only upon the Irish question, but on any question necessary to attain their object . . . but if they are bound to support any Government, not only upon every Irish question, but upon every question, financial, political, constitutional, foreign policy, or anything else—upon every question which the Government regard as necessary to keep them in office—why, it is plain to you, in that view of the case, that these Dissident Liberals would be nothing else but a tail of the Tory party." Over the future of this Irish question a dark veil rested, but behind it there lay, in a position of no serious historic distance, the great triumph of their cause.

Lord Randolph Churchill's Dartford speech drew a protest from Mr. Chaplin against his view of the closure, and confirmed the worst apprehensions of old-fashioned Tories. During his absence on a three-weeks' holiday, in which he travelled on the continent as "Mr. Spencer," a rumour arose that the new Government meant at once to deal with the Irish question, and that a Committee of the Cabinet had before it a measure for the establishment of a Provincial Council in each of the four provinces of Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connaught. Then the rumour changed, and reform of Procedure was to take the first place and Irish reform the second. There were some signs during the autumn of partial reunion in the Liberal ranks. Lord Rosebery made a firm, but very conciliatory, speech at Newcastle on the 19th of October, in which he expressed the desire that the seventy-three Dissident Liberals should make concessions to the hundred and ninety-six, and accept Mr. Gladstone as leader, and the general lines of his Irish policy. Then for "auld lang syne" there should be a mutual forgiving and forgetting. On the same day Mr. Bright wrote a letter declining to



attend a farewell meeting to Mr. Schnadhorst, on his removal to London, but expressing the kindest feeling to him and the highest appreciation of his great services to the Liberal cause. If he attended the meeting, he would be expected to speak, he said, without reference to the unhappy circumstances which had caused Mr. Schnadhorst's removal, and without dwelling on the unfortunate schism in the Liberal party. "I do not wish to attack my former friends, and to cast blame where I think grievous error has been committed. I can only hope the present clouds may be dispelled, and that our former harmony may be restored. To promote this, I think silence for the time is better than speaking." *The Times* of the next day, the 20th of October, published a letter by Lord Monck, reviewing the positions taken up by Mr. Gladstone, Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Parnell respectively, and suggesting how they might be brought into harmony. He found this common basis in the proposal, taken from the announcements of the Dissident leaders, to delegate certain powers to an Irish assembly, subject to a supervision of its Acts by the Imperial Parliament. This was, he said, no new principle, but was acted on by Parliament whenever power was given to municipal corporations to pass bye-laws. "Compared with Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule project, I would say," added Lord Monck, "the proposed plan represents the principle of decentralization as opposed to that of disintegration. Compared to the system of the United States it operates by way of devolution, as contradistinguished from division, of powers." *The Times*, in commenting upon the letter, said Lord Monck had somewhat mistaken the attitude of the Unionist Liberals, for Lord Hartington had never, so far as the writer was aware, suggested that the Imperial Parliament should delegate its powers to a local body wielding authority over the whole of Ireland. Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, expressed the hope that Lord Monck would continue his patriotic labours.

There was some fear among the opponents of conciliation



that such labours might bear fruit. They were troubled with persecuting doubts as to what the Government might do in this direction. *The Times*, on October the 21st, gave prominence to a letter, quoting one from a Roman Catholic in a southern county of Ireland, who said, "If the Government prove firm, as we expect they will, I will venture to answer for it that one year will see an end to boycotting, moonlighters, and mob law." The writer who sent the extract added, "there never was so much virtue in an 'if.'" Lord Randolph Churchill's first speech after his return from the continent did something to reassure the doubters. He went down on the 26th of October to the annual meeting of the National Union of Conservative Associations at Bradford, and was amply warned before he went. *The Times* told him that it was right the Tory party should now become a Moderate Liberal party, but that neither Conservatives nor Unionist Liberals might be content to see it transformed into a Radical party pure and simple. Lord Randolph was at his best. He made three speeches in one day all bright, dashing, resolute, and Radical. He was sanguine about Ireland. The harvest had been good, the landlords had been considerate, the tenants had been punctual. The country would soon know whether the Government would need more powers; at present he did not think it would. He repeated the pledge that the Government would deal with Local Government in Ireland. As to the Dartford programme which had made the Radicals "toss and writhe on their beds of sickness and pain," it was only "the mere repetition of the programme which was sketched out by Lord Salisbury in November last, in that great historical speech which he made at Newport." Lord Randolph spoke respectfully of "three acres and a cow," welcomed Mr. Jesse Collings as a valuable ally, and passed lightly over the rumours which had attributed to the Government a scheme for the establishment of National Councils in Ireland, by supposing that the article embodying the information that those rumours

existed had been written by Mr. Lucy for *Punch*, but had got by mistake to *The Daily News*. To enforce his argument for the adoption of the Radical suggestion for closure by the majority, he described the new attitude of the Liberal party as a source of danger so serious and alarming, that in presence of it many men had changed their minds on the subject of the Closure. "In your Parliament" he said—"that fortress of your liberties, that citadel of all your privileges and all your rights, in your Parliament you have a band of determined enemies, some two hundred strong, who are determined, until they attain their object, to smash up that Parliament and to degrade that authority, and to paralyze the efficiency of that House of Commons which during eight centuries has moulded your national life and guided your career." An easy way of closing debates was the one thing needful now. Mr. Chaplin protested against closure by a bare majority, but was more anxious about barley-growing, which was checked by the raising of eight millions yearly from beer. But even Mr. Chaplin accepted, or seemed to accept, Lord Randolph Churchill's legislative programme, which the assembled Conservatives had received as gladly as the rustics of Kent.

While these changes in the tone of Conservative speakers tended to reconcile their Liberal allies to the coalition with them, no signs of yielding to the demands of the Dissenters appeared among their old friends. The suggestion that Mr. Gladstone should retire, to which Mr. Gladstone had referred in his speech at Hawarden, was repeated only to be indignantly repudiated by the Liberals. The two-fifths of the party thought the three-fifths should go over to them; the three-fifths invited the two-fifths to come back. The larger body soon showed that it had the greater attractive force. At a meeting of the Scottish Liberal Association at Glasgow on the 30th of October, with Lord Elgin in the chair, Mr. A. L. Brown, Sir George Trevelyan's successor in the Border burghs, proposed a resolution pledging the meeting to hearty sympathy with Mr. Gladstone, in his

desire to secure a plan of Home Rule which would satisfy the just aspirations of the Irish people and secure the unity of the Empire. He thought the time had come when they must choose under which leader they would serve. "The sooner these so-called leaders of the Liberal party—Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain and others—know," said Mr. Brown, "that Liberals look on Mr. Gladstone as, both intellectually and morally, a man whose shoe-latchet they are not worthy to unloose, the better for those leaders and for the Liberals themselves." The motion was seconded by ex-Sheriff Smith of Greenock, and an amendment was proposed to the effect that such a policy would not heal divisions. Mr. Anstruther, M.P., pleaded that the motion would break up the Association; Lord Elgin urged conciliation, and Mr. Marjoribanks, the Liberal Whip, thought the Association might be kept as neutral ground, for none of them wished to drive the Liberal Unionists out. The advice of these influential persons was rejected. Of a hundred and fifty delegates present nine voted for the amendment, and all the rest for Mr. Brown's resolution.

A like spirit prevailed at the meetings of the National Liberal Federation at Leeds on the 3rd of November. The Municipal elections on the 1st of November had shown slight Conservative gains, less, however, than in one or two previous years. The Conservative tide in the boroughs, which was flowing fast in 1885, had reached its full flood, though the ebb had not yet begun. The members of the National Liberal Federation had recovered from the Liberal overthrow in the summer, and were full of heart and hope. They had gathered in larger numbers than before, and Sir James Kitson, in opening the proceedings, said that a hundred Liberal Associations had joined the Federation since the secession of Mr. Chamberlain and his supporters, and that the increase in the number of Associations was thirty per cent. After the Chairman had moved, and Sir Walter Foster had seconded, the adoption of the Report, the next motion made from the Chair was a vote of confi-



dence in Mr. Gladstone as the leader of the Liberal party. Mr. Philip Stanhope, in seconding this resolution, said they were led to believe that reconciliation with the seceders was only possible by their abandonment of Home Rule. "Never," shouted the delegates. "You have answered it for me," he replied. "Never, not even to restore to our fold the most illustrious among them will we waver in the course our great leader has pointed out for us." At a great public meeting in the Colosseum at night there was a still more striking expression of this feeling. Mr. John Morley was in the chair, and in the course of his opening speech, after speaking of the programme the Conference had adopted—Home Rule, Land reform, county government, local option, religious equality, free schools, reform of Parliamentary procedure, registration reform, and non-intervention and retrenchment—said that the meeting would dispel the fear that they were entering on a period of "cantankerous personalities—a period in which, instead of great parties based on broad convictions, they would have little factions, shifting combinations existing for some paltry convenience of the hour." "One hundred and fifty years ago," continued Mr. Morley, "there was a great English statesman,—one of the two or three greatest Ministers that England has ever had because for nearly twenty years he tried to give England and to give Europe peace. Men of that stamp a hundred and fifty years ago and to-day naturally excite many enmities. Sir Robert Walpole aroused many enmities, and a great combination of Tories and Whigs, who agreed in nothing else, agreed in a motion which they brought forward in the House of Commons, and the motion was this—you will see the point presently—that a humble address be presented to his Majesty that he would be graciously pleased to remove the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole from his Majesty's presence and councils for ever." There is a combination to-day of men who agree in nothing so much as that her Majesty would be graciously pleased to remove from her



councils for ever a Minister as great as Sir Robert Walpole. (Loud cheers.) Gentlemen, we are all for union, but with those who are in that state of mind we cannot consent to argue. We will make no terms with them. We are not here to choose our leader. There is no vacancy." At these words the vast audience sprang to their feet and cheered and waved their handkerchiefs and then broke into rounds of Kentish Fire. Somebody started the song "The Grand Old Man," and the organ broke in and the audience sang it with enthusiasm. Then Mr. Morley went on, every sentence emphasized by cheers, "Time, gentlemen, has chosen our leader, to whom we are indebted for years of devoted service to his country and to the great cause of justice and freedom, not only in his own country but all over the world. Those are Mr. Gladstone's titles to fame, and they are his titles to our allegiance, as to-day's events have written up, in great letters which no man can pretend to mistake. There is all over the Kingdom, not in Yorkshire only, an allegiance unbroken, a loyalty unquenched, a gratitude that Time will not dim."

Mr. Morley then referred to Lord Randolph Churchill's programme. "As long as they play our tunes," he said, "it is a secondary matter who conducts the orchestra." As to the changes in the Tory attitude he said: "If these evolutions are politics, I declare, quite simply and sincerely, I had rather be a highwayman than a politician. A highwayman has more exercise, has more open air, keeps better hours, and his trade is quite as reputable." The Tory reforms, however, would not go far. "You will not get a bounteous affluence of fresh water into the Tory pump by the simple act of fitting it with a brand new Radical handle kindly lent for the occasion by a friend from Birmingham." Passing in review the state of Ireland, the attitude of the Dissident Liberals, and the position of the Liberal party, Mr. Morley concluded by saying, as to the settlement of the Irish question: "There is no doubt that the Liberal party—the Liberal leaders and the Liberal rank and file all over

the length and breadth of the land—are resolved that the question shall not slumber nor sleep, and are resolved that there is only one way in which it can be settled, and that is the way which was devised by the courage and the genius of Mr. Gladstone, and has been faithfully supported by those who understand best what Liberal principles are, what are the necessities of Ireland, and what the justice and the policy of the case most urgently demand.”

Sir William Harcourt expanded and enforced the same teaching by a brilliant exposure of the tactics of the Government and its coalesced supporters. He analyzed Lord Randolph Churchill’s proposals, showed how he had abandoned all his own Conservative principles and adopted those of his Liberal and Radical opponents, and had spoken in “a tone of childish and insolent triumph, which, according to the belief of the ancient Greeks, was the precursor of an early Nemesis”—a shrewd forecast that was to be completely justified more quickly than the speaker or his great audience knew. Speaking of the composition of the majority which supported the Government, Sir William Harcourt said: “We were told at Dartford that the present Government owe much of their existence and their efficiency to the Unionist Liberals. I should think they did. By themselves, they are very much like an empty sack which cannot stand upright. . . . The Union Liberals are to support the Tory Government whatever they do, and on the other hand the Tory Government are to do whatever the Union Liberals desire. . . . It is a coalition founded on a rotten and unsubstantial basis.” After replying in detail to Lord Randolph Churchill’s attacks and exposing his contradictions and inconsistencies, Sir William Harcourt concluded by saying, “Let us be of good faith and good cheer, for as the past is our possession, the future is our inheritance.”

The effect of these important declarations of Liberal opinion was to put an end to the suggestions of Mr. Gladstone’s retirement, which had been sometimes

whispered, sometimes loudly spoken, by the Dissident Liberals. It was clear that, whatever course events might take, that way to reconciliation was absolutely blocked. The proposal was regarded by the Liberal party as so utterly unworthy that it not only roused their indignation against their seceding friends, but deepened the loyalty of the great masses of the Liberals to the leader the seceders would depose. The Dissidents were no longer regarded as alienated friends to be won back, but as mutineers to be defeated and driven out. Mr. Morley's phrase, "there is no vacancy," became the Liberal watchword; and any who desired to proclaim a vacancy were regarded as Liberals no longer. Some of them therefore fell back upon the vague hope that at any time the vacancy might come. The Parliament, they said, is elected for seven years. We shall take care that it lasts out its time, and by 1892 or 1893 the question of the Liberal leadership will have solved itself. This cynical reckoning on Mr. Gladstone's venerable age, this pitting of the life of the Parliament against the life of the leader whom they would exclude from power, was one of the chief causes of the angry feeling the Dissident Liberals aroused among the local Liberal leaders in the constituencies. It was one of the forces which sent waverers back. Resentment against it and a noble sense of its unworthiness and meanness, gave a deeper tone to the enthusiasm with which the Liberal voters hailed Mr. Gladstone's name. In many men of high feeling and firm purpose it became a chief object of political desire that Mr. Gladstone should disappoint these unfeeling calculations and frustrate these unworthy hopes. Mr. Gladstone's health and vigour became to them one of the chief interests and anxieties of the time. The firm determination of the whole Liberal party was that if Mr. Gladstone lived he should be Prime Minister again, and that if that satisfaction were denied to them his spirit and the memory of his sacrifices and endeavours should mould the legislation of the great party which would win its victories in his name.



It soon became known that within the Cabinet itself things were not going as merrily as marriage bells. There was no hint of any difficulty when Lord Salisbury went to the Lord Mayor's banquet on the ninth of November; but there had been several indications of restlessness. Mr. Chaplin fought hard against Lord Randolph Churchill's plans for the Closure; and a good many undistinguished Tories, who thought more of their principles than of their placemen, were greatly disturbed by what they regarded as his legislative novelties. There was, moreover, a sudden recrudescence of the disturbing movements of the unemployed, and a proposal that a great procession should follow the Lord Mayor's show was with some difficulty frustrated. In his Guildhall speech Lord Salisbury showed the restraining influence of official responsibility. When he spoke of Ireland needing twenty years of resolute government that did not flinch, he was the leader of a militant minority: at the Guildhall he was the Prime Minister. He talked, of course, of the mandate the constituencies had given to him and to his Government to maintain the integrity of the Empire; but he hinted rather at the firm execution of existing law in Ireland than at the need for further powers. He said that the relations between landlords and their tenants had improved, and that he need hardly repeat the contradiction General Buller had published, of the idea that Ministers had in any way obtained this result by tampering with the duties imposed on them by law. "We possess no dispensing power," said Lord Salisbury, "we have exercised no dispensing power, we have merely tried to administer the law as we found it; but we have in private as we have in public not ceased to exhort all who come within our influence to exercise their legal rights with due consideration for their fellow-citizens, which is the only way in which a community can pursue its course in harmony [and peace." It was not to legislation but to a steady course of honest government he looked. He did not exclude legislation; it might be necessary, but



he should recommend as little as possible. "The salvation of Ireland for the time is to be found more in good government than in an alteration of the law, and the sooner we can dissuade her population from speculating in politics, the more rapidly they will take to more wholesome modes of thought."

It was with an evident sense of relief that Lord Salisbury then turned to foreign affairs. He began with Egypt. "Our stay in Egypt, as you well know, has been held by governments of all colours to be limited in duration, but the limit is not a limit of time, it is a limit of the work we have to do." Turning from Egypt to Bulgaria he said, "A midnight conspiracy, which I need not qualify, a midnight conspiracy of the officers in whom the gallant and able Prince who ruled over Bulgaria had placed his special trust and whom he had led to victory, they, debauched by foreign gold, turned against the Prince who had led them, and hurled him from the throne. The event was received with deep condemnation by the conscience and sentiment of Europe. With scarcely less condemnation did Europe hear that the resources of foreign diplomacy had been employed in order to save those men from the doom they had justly merited." There had been encroachment after encroachment on the rights of a free people; but the Bulgarians had behaved well, and might yet have a brilliant history. Their rights were secured by the Berlin Treaty, on which the peace of South-Eastern Europe rested. There was on us no isolated duty to defend that Treaty, though this country would do her part if other countries would do theirs. If British interests were affected England would ask for no counsel and seek for no assistance, her own right arm would be strong enough to defend her interests wherever they were attacked. Austria and Turkey were the most closely concerned, and Austria's policy would very much contribute to the shaping of that of England. At present, however, he saw no cause for apprehension of any disturbance of the peace of Europe.

This speech created some excitement on the continent, but was received with complete indifference at home. *The Daily News* and *The Times* agreed that the references to Bulgaria might have been made by Mr. Gladstone himself. The references to Ireland attracted far more attention. They seemed to indicate that the policy of coercion would not be resorted to, and that the Liberal supporters of the Government would control its action. A speech by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach at the Dolphin Society's Colston banquet at Bristol on the 13th confirmed this impression. He spoke of the hot and cold fits the Governments of the day had gone through in respect of Ireland. "At one time there has been a fit of repressive legislation, not without its dangers, though producing quiet for a time; at another time, as we saw the other day, those in power have thrown off all responsibility for Ireland, and in despair have attempted to give her complete control of her own affairs. The middle way was best—the way of quiet, steady, constitutional administration of the law as they found it. He praised the forbearance of the landlords, and the improved spirit of the tenants; and vaguely hinted at the speedy production of measures which would be "of great benefit to the owners and occupiers of land in Ireland."

It is quite clear from these speeches that, in the middle of November, the Government had not made up its mind to propose a Coercion Bill. The Ministers were, in fact, striving hard to do without it. Two influences, however, were pushing them on towards the plunge. There was the Plan of Campaign on the one hand, and the outcry of the landlords on the other. Ministers had refused to legislate for the stay of evictions, and they had found it needful to attempt to do by private persuasion and official pressure what Mr. Parnell's Bill would have accomplished by legal process. The landlords were in a worse case than that in which the rejected measure would have placed them. Had that passed they would have got the half of their November

rents at once ; now they were in many cases unable to get any rents at all. They fell back upon the law, and loudly complained that there was no help for them in the Government. On the 17th of November Mr. Arthur Balfour was admitted to the Cabinet, and on the 18th a leading article in *The Times*, commenting on rumours of Sir Robert Hamilton's removal from the post of permanent Under-Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, gave full expression to their grumblings. "In our opinion," said *The Times*, "the Government ought to have taken this step, for reasons we have long ago explained, when they came into office." Sir Robert Hamilton was, in fact, a Home Ruler ; and, "in consequence," said *The Times*, "the energy of Government was visibly and dangerously weakened while he was in office." But it was not Sir Robert Hamilton only against whom complaints were levelled. "It is to be hoped," wrote *The Times* in the same leading article, "that whether Sir Robert Hamilton goes or stays there will be a new departure in the conduct of the police authorities with respect to evictions. Whatever difficulties may stand in the way of the immediate suppression of boycotting or the prevention of agrarian outrages, there can be no pretence for asserting that the executive power, in any part of Ireland, is not strong enough to carry into effect the Queen's writ, and to place the Sheriff in possession of a holding where the tenant is in default. Resident magistrates and police officers—and even Sir Redvers Buller himself—would be better employed in attending to this elementary duty than in passing judgment upon questions as to the fairness of rents and the solvency of tenants which are out of their proper sphere, and in regard to which they can claim no authority. The Government can make its appeals to the landlords for generosity, clemency, and moderation, in the exercise of their legal rights through the regular channels, such as the Lord Lieutenants of counties, and the justices of the peace. It is not desirable that officials who have to carry out the decrees of the courts of law should also be charged with



the employment of what is a form of political influence, even if exerted for useful public objects."

Sir Robert Hamilton was appointed Governor of Tasmania, but his removal made no change. The work of eviction was carried on with reluctance by officials who, in Wordsworth's words,—

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears,

hated the work they had to do. To turn poor peasants out of the hovels they had built with their own hands, to throw their few poor household goods, their old people, their sick, their little children, out on the muddy road in the rain and wind of an Irish winter, was inhuman work which nobody who was on the spot could even look upon with patience. It was prompted by absentee landlords, by people with no imagination, who could not realize the horrors enacted in their name a few hundred miles away, and by politicians in whom race hatreds and political and religious passions were stronger than their sympathy with the weak or their pity for the poor. The Government could not wholly neglect these promptings, but its agents moved very reluctantly in obedience to them, if they moved at all. Another motive, too, weighed strongly with the Government. These things could no longer be done in a corner. There were newspaper correspondents at Woodford and Glenbeigh, and wherever evictions were going on, and a world which was not unfeeling was reading the story day by day. The Government was not yet strong enough to brave the indignation these proceedings caused. The air was still full of the professions of conciliation made by the Dissident Liberals, and it was believed that they would refuse their consent to any return to the old policy of violence and repression. So deeply impressed was the Government with this danger, that in an article on "The Coming Session," in the January number of *The Quarterly Review*, it was distinctly laid down that the Conservatives had to guard

against any tendency to reactionary measures. "The Government is under no pledge," said *The Quarterly*, "to introduce new legislation for Ireland." Their ideal was just to keep things as quiet as possible, and to wait for the coming of better times. The problem was becoming insoluble, but they could not give it up at once. The middle course between repression and self-government, between Home Rule and Coercion, was proving utterly impracticable, but they must still keep their faces set towards it. The Liberals had insisted that Coercion was the alternative to Home Rule, and their coalesced opponents were being steadily driven to make choice between the two.

Meanwhile the Liberals were showing more and more signs of recovery. There was a great Conference at Leicester on the 25th of November, where the utmost unanimity and enthusiasm prevailed, and Mr. E. Clephan, President of the Leicester Liberal Association, presided at a great meeting in the Floral Hall at night, at which Lord Spencer and Mr. H. H. Fowler spoke. Mr. John Morley paid a visit to Scotland at the end of that month and the beginning of December, and found a like spirit abroad. In a speech at Hawick on the 29th of November he pointed the moral of the Irish difficulties of the Government, by showing that they were trying, by moral pressure on the landlords, to bring about what Mr. Parnell's Relief Bill would have effected by law. On the 6th of December, Sir Walter Foster presided over a Cheshire Conference at Runcorn, which not only endorsed the Liberal programme adopted at Leeds, but added special riders in favour of Disestablishment in Wales and London Municipal Reform. On the 14th a North Wales Liberal Federation was established at a Conference at Rhyl, where Welsh Disestablishment and a Land Bill for Wales were demanded by resolutions passed unanimously. The North Wales Liberals asked for reasonable continuity of tenure at a fair rent, with full compensation for all improvements made by the tenant, and

security for free cultivation of the soil, and free sale of its products. This Conference was followed up on the 24th of January by a Conference at Cardiff at which the South Wales and Monmouthshire Liberal Federation was created, and resolutions in favour of Disestablishment in Wales and a Welsh Land Bill were passed. At a great meeting at the Park Hall in the evening another subject took a prominent place. Ireland was already in a condition of disquiet. The anticipated winter struggle had begun, and the Cardiff Liberals evinced so strong a feeling in favour of the poor tenants of Ireland that a resolution was passed recording "intense indignation at the conduct of the Irish landlords who have carried out the barbarous evictions in Kerry," and calling on the Government "to cease rendering assistance to the perpetrators of these atrocities." There were many similar expressions of feeling at Liberal meetings, and so widespread was the indignation these Kerry evictions roused, that some Conservative papers entered protests against them, and many Liberals came round to the support of the Plan of Campaign. It had just become apparent to everybody, even to some of the Dissident Liberals, that the forecast of events made by Mr. Gladstone and his supporters in the elections was coming true: that there could be only two policies for Ireland, that in rejecting local self-government the Coalition would be thrown upon the other horn of the dilemma, and the dreary round of repression and cruelty would begin again.

This state of feeling, however, belongs to the period of the Cardiff meeting, and not to the last weeks of 1886. No shadow of these evictions rested on the prospect as it was seen by the illusioned eyes of the Liberal supporters of the Government as the year closed in. Up to Christmas they believed that the Tory Administration would adopt and carry out a Liberal policy in legislation and would take a conciliatory course in Ireland. The Tories were by no means so pleased with the prospect or so complacent with themselves. Mr. Chaplin showed much restlessness under



Lord Randolph Churchill's leadership, and it seemed now and then as though a portion of the Tory team would break away, if he continued to hold the reins and drive the coach. He gave them great dissatisfaction by a speech in which he eloquently set forth the economic objections to the Metropolitan Coal and Wine Dues, and told the Metropolitan Board of Works that the Government would not permit the dues to be re-imposed. Mr. Raikes, too, created some offence in Liverpool by terminating the contracts for the conveyance of the American mails by the Cunard and White Star steamship lines. The Government got a strong reminder from the Brighton Tories of the difficulties that might arise in the Tory constituencies from their coalition with the recalcitrant Liberals. The death of Mr. David Smith made a vacancy at Brighton, and Mr. Goschen was at once thought of as his successor by the leaders of both wings of the Coalition. But Mr. Goschen would only stand as a Liberal, and would only consent to take his seat on the Liberal side of the House, and the Brighton Tories would not have him on those terms. Sir George Trevelyan, who was at Rome, was telegraphed to, but he refused to stand, and at length the Tories chose the President of their own local Association, Dr. W. Tindal Robertson, and he was returned unopposed.

In these circumstances of Liberal revival and Tory discouragement the Dissident Liberals held a great field day and review, bringing all their forces into grand display. They held a Conference of the Liberal Unionist Association at Willis's rooms on the 7th of December, at which nearly every prominent member of the party was present in person, or by a letter which enabled his name to be mentioned. Thus, in addition to the great gathering itself the names of several hundred persons scattered over the whole country were read out, as having shown their full sympathy with the objects of the meeting. It was an immense and imposing demonstration, and impressed the Liberal Dissidents and their Tory allies with the magnitude, the impor-

tance and the great political and social influence of the Liberal element in the Coalition. If the Liberals themselves were not equally impressed with the array of their own friends against them, it was because they knew how few of the privates in the Liberal army had followed the lead of the revolting officers. The Liberal organizations remained, though valuable subscribers, influential patrons and men whose names had been a source of strength, had deserted to the enemy. It was in money, in leaders, in men who had been in the front, in all the ornamental part of their organization, that the Liberal Associations suffered. In actual numbers their loss was small. They had given up expecting that the lost leaders would come back, and this meeting did not revive their hopes. So far from bringing nearer the reconciliation which both sides had desired, it pushed it further away.

Lord Hartington, who took the chair at the Conference, spoke to the assembled representatives of the Liberal side of the new Coalition with all frankness as to the difficulties of their position, but with all possible firmness as to the duty of supporting the Government. Whether intentionally or not, he showed the folly of Lord Salisbury's talk about the final and irrevocable character of the decision of the country at the late general election. "We are in a difficult position," he said. "We shall have to confront still greater dangers and still greater difficulties than we have confronted hitherto. They may be too great for our sagacity and our courage to confront, but assuredly we shall not be in a worse position, we shall be in a better position successfully to confront them, if we do not refuse to look all our difficulties and our whole position fully in the face." This was not much like the declaration of a victorious leader; it was more like the talk of one seeking how to overcome some dire calamity, and feeling his way to discover what reinforcement he could gain from hope, if not what resolution from despair. Yet Lord Hartington would not, like Lord Salisbury, let his friends be self-

deceived by exaggerating the completeness of their success. The Home Rule measure had been defeated—but the Home Rule policy remained. "It would be idle for us to suppose," he told his too confident audience, "that because the first assault has failed, the attempt will be relinquished or abandoned; and it would be idle to suppose that regular siege will not be laid to that position which our opponents have hitherto failed to capture by storm." Lord Selborne, who followed, found great consolation in Professor Dicey's lately-published book, "England's Case against Home Rule"; and Mr. George Dixon, who said he had been one of those who looked forward with expectation, mingled with hope, to a reunion of the Liberal party, confessed that "the hope had been utterly disappointed." There were many expressions of confidence, but the speakers soon fell back into the minor key. Sir Henry James wound up a speech, full of excellent feeling towards those from whom they were severed, by saying that they would find enough in the future to comfort them in their exertions, or if they were to be defeated to console them in their defeat, and Lord Hartington in his concluding address said, "Far from entertaining any feeling of exultation for what we have achieved, I have often felt disappointment—bitter disappointment—that we have not been able to achieve more." But they, at least, existed now as an influential party which no other party in the State could afford to disregard.

A forcible illustration of the difficulties—and, at the same time, of the Parliamentary strength—of Lord Hartington's party, was close at hand. On the night after their banquet Lord Salisbury was the guest of the City Conservative Club, and he thought it prudent to reply to the charge that they had abandoned their principles and adopted Radical principles instead. He assured his audience that the Ministers were bound to adhere closely to their Conservative principles, and that they would do so "in good and evil report, in good weather and in foul weather." They



had announced their determination to deal with local government, "first, local government in England and Scotland, and then, in due time, local government in Ireland." They would deal, too, with land transfer, with licensing, with allotments, and with Parliamentary procedure, but would do nothing inconsistent with Conservative principles. Such were the conditions of the Coalition as laid down by the stronger of the two parties to it. Already, when Lord Salisbury was speaking, the old state of things in Ireland had been brought back. Once more members of Parliament were under prosecution for things said and done as political leaders; and there was active conflict between the masses of the Irish people and the Government. Public feeling had already been deeply stirred by stories of cruel evictions on the one hand, and by denunciations of the Plan of Campaign on the other, when it was suddenly announced, on the 23rd of December, that Lord Randolph Churchill had resigned. An announcement, published with his personal sanction, stated that the resignation was due to "his unwillingness to burden the national finances with the sums deemed necessary by the Admiralty and War Office for the defence of the country." Other circumstances, however, had combined in the past few weeks to make him feel that his position was a false one. "He has not been satisfied," said the announcement, "with the shape which the legislative measures for Great Britain, to be introduced next Session, have assumed after discussion in the Cabinet. They do not appear to him adequate to the requirements of the country."

This event created an excitement altogether out of proportion to its real magnitude or importance. Had Lord Randolph Churchill possessed any considerable following in the Tory ranks, or had he been gifted with any popular sympathies, his secession might have had serious results for the Government. His friends spoke of his resignation as having completely changed the political situation, and there were Liberals and Tories who thought it had given Lord

Salisbury's Government a fatal blow. Lord Salisbury himself partook of the general feeling. He telegraphed to Rome, whither Lord Hartington had gone for a holiday, and asked him to come back and help the Government. He was to choose his own course, only he must come and save the Coalition cause. Lord Hartington came back at once ; and old politicians were reminded of the November day, fifty-two years before, when, as Mr. Disraeli said, "the hurried Hudson rushed into the Chambers of the Vatican," or, more accurately, into the dining-room of a Roman banker, to bring Sir Robert Peel back to take the place of Lord Melbourne, whom the King had dismissed. Peel had been two weeks on his way home—Lord Hartington was but three days. He left Rome on Sunday night, and as a great storm that night broke down the telegraph wires, nothing was known of his movements till he got to London on Wednesday evening, the 29th of December. But in the few days between Lord Salisbury's appeal to him and his arrival in London, the political prospect had changed. Lord Salisbury was quite ready to put himself under Lord Hartington's leadership in a Coalition Ministry, but from the first it was doubtful whether his followers in the House of Commons would imitate his self-abnegation. If Lord Hartington formed a Cabinet, a good many other Liberals must come in with him, and a corresponding number of Tories must go out. This seemed to the rank and file of the Tory party like snatching the fruits of victory from them just as they had settled down to enjoy the spoils. Lord Salisbury was promptly made to feel that, for the present, at least, a Coalition Ministry was out of the question ; and that the great body of the Tory party insisted that the head of the Government should be a Tory. On the other hand, Lord Hartington's friends did not wish him to enter a Ministry in any other capacity than that of chief. On the day after his arrival at Devonshire House he was visited by Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Courtney, Mr. H. Brand, and others, and they agreed

that the formation of a Coalition Government under Lord Hartington was, for the present, impossible, and that Lord Salisbury's request must be refused. But it was felt that he might be assured of the support of the Dissident Liberals to whatever extent might be needful to prevent Mr. Gladstone from coming back to power. This assurance was given, and there the matter stood when the old year went out and the new year—the Jubilee Year—came in.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## “THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.”

THE chief argument advanced by Mr. Parnell and his Liberal supporters on behalf of his Tenants' Relief Bill had been that something must be done to stay evictions during the approaching winter. The rents would be due in November, and the fall in agricultural prices had been so great, that the sale of their whole produce by the tenants would not, it was contended, bring in money enough to enable them to pay in full. The price of wheat, which was ten shillings and twopence a hundredweight in 1881, was four shillings less in August, 1886; oats and barley had undergone about half this reduction; while butter had fallen twenty-nine per cent. below the average of the forty years ending 1885, beef twelve per cent., wool forty-three per cent., and potatoes twenty-five per cent. To some extent this fall had been allowed for in fixing the judicial rents, but only a part of it had been thus anticipated, and some sub-commissioners of the Land Courts, who were seen by a Special Correspondent of *The Pall Mall Gazette*, said that neither they nor their colleagues foresaw in any degree the great extent of the diminution in the value of produce, or expected prices to go down much below what they were in 1878 and 1879. “Then your fair rents of 1881, 1882, 1883, and 1884 are unfair rents to-day?” asked the Correspondent of a member of the Land Court. He answered, “There is no doubt of it. I am the first to admit it. If you look at the reductions which we are

making, you will see what a different estimate we make of the rental value of the land now, from that which prevailed in the first years of the Land Act." A list of twelve landlords in the County of Roscommon, whose rents were fixed in October, 1886, showed that the reductions on a total rental of £592 amounted to £245, leaving the fair judicial rent £347.

There had been a good deal of discussion earlier in the year as to the effect of the agricultural depression on the ability of the Irish tenants to pay their rents. The large reductions which were then being made by the Land Courts in fixing judicial rents had produced loud complaints, and hints were thrown out of political animus in some of the officials. The most important contribution to this discussion was made by Sir James Caird in a letter published in *The Times* on the 20th of March. In this letter Sir James Caird pointed out that the land in Ireland was held by two classes of tenants—small farmers, whose rents were from one pound to twenty pounds a year, and comparatively large farmers, who paid twenty pounds and upwards. Of the class of small farmers there were 538,000 whose rent averaged from five to six pounds a year. The rent payable by this class was £3,572,000; that payable by the larger farmers was £6,845,000; so that five-sixths of the tenants only paid one-third of the total rent of Irish land, and the remaining two-thirds was paid by one-sixth of the tenants. It was on this large class of small holders that the stress of the agricultural depression had fallen; and Sir James Caird expressed the opinion that "if the present price of agricultural produce continues, I should fear that, from the land held by the large body of poor farmers in Ireland, economic rent has, for the present, disappeared." In other words, the land was not worth cultivating; there was no margin beyond the necessary cost of working it out of which rent could be paid. The money with which rent had to be paid was not made, and no rent was to be had. This was the conclusion *The*

*Times*, in commenting on this statement, drew from it. After justly describing Sir James Caird's authority on agricultural questions as unimpeachable and universally recognized, *The Times* remarked, "It is not too much to say that the rental of the 538,000 holdings is practically irrecoverable by anybody, whether landlord, English Government, or Irish Government."

Here was the whole story of Irish distress and discontent in a nutshell. Sir James Caird's striking statement profoundly impressed the public mind. "Economic rent has for the present disappeared," became one of those familiar phrases which everybody feels to sum up an argument. When the next rents became due it was found at once that the fund out of which they had to be paid had "for the present disappeared," and that the rental of a large proportion of the 538,000 holdings was, as *The Times* had said, "practically irrecoverable by anybody." But those who had given prominence to this statement in the spring had laid it aside before the autumn. The disappearance of economic rent, the fact, stated on the highest agricultural authority, that the rental of the 538,000 holdings was practically irrecoverable by anybody, was an excellent weapon against Mr. Gladstone's proposal to buy out the Irish landlords; but when the Irish members used it as a plea for the reconsideration of judicial rents, it lost all its force. It was as true in November and December as it had been in March; but political circumstances had changed, and the disappearance of economic rent, which was so convenient an argument against Mr. Gladstone, became very inconvenient when used by Mr. Parnell. It was therefore laid aside, ignored, and at last forgotten, and when Irish landlords and distressed Irish ladies put their sad case before the British people, all the blame of their sufferings was put upon the wicked tenants who would not pay their lawful rent, and nobody remembered that the highest agricultural authority had declared that such payment was impossible. The half-starved, ill-clothed and ill-fed

peasants, living in hovels their own hands had built, could not procure the rent the land had ceased to yield. It was a miserable feature of society in 1887 that it contained so many men and women who were content to live in ease and comfort from a revenue of three millions and a half drawn from the hard, bitter, wearying, unremunerated toil of half a million of Irish peasants, from whose little holdings "economic rent" had "for the present disappeared." When even these poor toilers could no longer get the money from the unfruitful soil, all the resources of civilization were put in action to force it from them. They came to England as harvest men, sleeping in barns and stacks that they might carry a few pounds back with them to pay the rent. Their daughters sent the wages they earned as domestic servants in Canada, in Australia, in the American cities, and in the great towns of England and Scotland, that the parental hovel might be saved from seizure for arrears of rent. The economic rent had disappeared, but the peasant must get elsewhere what the soil would no longer yield him, for the law held him to his bond, and all the might of England was exerted to enforce it.

There were many signs in England, Wales, and Scotland, of the heavy pressure of agricultural depression. If rents were not greatly reduced, good landlords gave fifteen, twenty, and thirty per cent. back when the rent was paid, and their munificence was duly announced by paragraphs in the newspapers. This was done to some extent in Ireland though many landlords, or their agents, said, "the law has fixed the rent and must get it for us." It was for this reason, and because the double ownership of the Irish land made it to the landlord's interest to evict a tenant, that the Liberal party gave its support to Mr. Parnell's Tenants' Relief Bill. The Government and its majority—for most of the Dissident Liberals went with them—having refused this relief, it was needful to resort to other means. On their side the Government appealed to the good feeling of the landlords, and the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union.



expressed the hope that landowners would "act with moderation with regard to evictions." They had not done this earlier in the year. Mr. Parnell, in his speech on moving the second reading of his Tenants' Relief Bill, had pointed out that in the quarter ending with March, when Mr. Morley was for a time Chief Secretary, and the "disappearance of economic rent" had just begun to attract attention, the evictions were only 698, involving 3,477 persons; but in the quarter ending with June, when the fate of the Home Rule Bill was certain, the numbers mounted up to 1,309 families; in the next quarter 1,037 families were evicted, and there had been an increase in the quarter then current. In Munster, in the quarter ending with June, there had been 428 evictions, of which 187 had been in the one county of Kerry, whither the Government had sent General Buller. But the greatest public interest in the subject was roused by Lord Clanricarde's evictions at Woodford in Galway. Lord Clanricarde was an absentee landlord. From the death of his father in 1874 not a tenant on the estate had seen the landlord or held any communication with him. He was popularly called Lord Clanrackrent. His quarrel with his Woodford tenants was of old standing. When the Home Rule Bill was before Parliament the National League urged them not to bring matters to a crisis, but their sufferings were too great to be borne, and they set the National League at defiance, and established a Plan of Campaign of their own. Lord Clanricarde would grant them no reduction, and they leagued themselves together, three hundred and sixteen in number, and when the November rent day came round in 1885 they resolved not to pay any rent at all if twenty-five per cent. reduction was refused. This was refused, and they withheld their rent. About thirty-eight of these owed £20, or more, and could be proceeded against by writ; the rest averaged about four pounds a year, and could only be dealt with by the ordinary process of ejectment. By some informality the ejectment notices were quashed, and of the writs ten were settled by

agreement, and in twenty-eight cases the tenant rights, worth, it was said, £200 each, were sold and bought by the landlord for fifty shillings each. The eviction of four of these tenants, in August 1886, attracted general attention by the long fight the people made for their homes. Each house was besieged and defended like some mediæval city. One stone house, built by a tenant at a cost of £200, got the name of Saunders's fort. It was held by a garrison of twenty-four, who threw boiling water on their assailants, and in one part of the fight threw out among them a hive of bees. After two days' struggle the sub-sheriff and his men withdrew, and it was nearly a week before he returned, reinforced by two hundred soldiers, and having scaling ladders and a movable shed under which to advance to the siege. After two hours of fighting the house was taken and the occupants sent off to gaol. To evict these four men the whole available forces of the Crown in Galway were employed from Thursday the 19th of August to Friday the 27th. Seven hundred policemen and soldiers were present to protect the emergency men who carried out the evictions, and sixty peasants were taken to Galway gaol.

It was to meet cases of this kind that, after the rejection of Mr. Parnell's Tenants' Relief Bill, the Plan of Campaign was started. In a speech at Woodford on the 17th of October Mr. John Dillon gave an outline of the scheme on which he thought a tenants' campaign against unjust rents might be started and carried on all over the country. Mr. Dillon, like Lord Salisbury, is sometimes carried away when he speaks. In Lord Salisbury's case the temptation to say a clever thing proves irresistible; in Mr. Dillon's an impetuous rush of noble sympathy with the wronged brings out impassioned words which read in cold blood seem violent. Some language he used at Woodford towards the agents of the oppression of which he was speaking was widely used afterwards against him and his Plan. The Plan itself, however, was, as Mr. William O'Brien forcibly and persistently urged, only to be used where the tenants had a just

and moderate and unimpeachable case, as all the world granted that Lord Clanricarde's Woodford tenantry had. On the 23rd of October the "Plan of Campaign" was published in full detail in *United Ireland*. The first question to be answered, said the "Plan," was, How to meet the November demand for rent? On every estate the tenantry were to come together and decide whether to combine or not in resistance to exorbitant rent. When they were assembled, if the priest were not with them, they were to "appoint an intelligent and sturdy member of their body as chairman, and after consulting, decide by resolution on the amount of abatement they will demand." A committee of six or more and the chairman were then to be elected, to be called a Managing Committee, to take charge of the half year's rent of each tenant should the landlord refuse it. Every one present was to pledge himself (1) To abide by the decision of the majority; (2) To hold no communication with the landlord or his agents, except in presence of the body of the tenantry; (3) To accept no settlement for himself that was not given to every tenant on the estate. Having thus pledged themselves each to the others they were to go to the rent office in a body on the rent day, or the gale day, as it is called in Ireland, and if the agent refused to see them in a body they were to depute the chairman to act as their spokesman and tender the reduced rent. If the agent refused to accept it, then the money was to be handed to the Managing Committee "to fight the landlord with." The fund thus got together was to be employed in supporting tenants who were dispossessed by sale or ejectment. The National League was to guarantee the continuance of the grants if needful after the fund was expended, or as long as the majority of the tenants held out.

The most careful directions were given to the tenants as to the legal remedies in the hands of the landlord; and the power of the tenant to frustrate them. "A tenant who has made up his mind for the fight," said the Plan, "will have his cattle turned into money before the judgment



comes on. . . . Sale of a farm is not of so much consequence. Every farm sold in this manner during the agitation either has come back or is bound to come back to its owner even on better terms than he first held it. But if a man has a very valuable interest in his farm he can place it beyond the sheriff's power by mortgaging it to somebody to whom he owes money. At a sale, if the landlord or emergency men be represented, the cattle should not be allowed to go at a nominal sum. They should be run up to their price and, if possible, left in the hands of emergency men at full price. . . . In bidding for a farm it should also be run to amount of debt, but by a man of straw who, if it were knocked down, would ask the sheriff for time to pay. By making the landlord's bidder run it up to the amount of debt and costs, and leaving it on his hands the sheriff cannot follow the tenant further." Full information was given, too, as to the procedure both in ejectment and in distress, so that the tenant should be able to make the most of any legal point in his favour. This astute document concluded "The fullest publicity should be given to evictions, and every effort made to enlist public sympathy. That the farms thus unjustly evicted will be left severely alone, and every one who aids the evictors shunned, it is scarcely necessary to say. But the man who tries boycotting for a personal purpose is a worse enemy than the evicting landlord, and should be expelled from any branch of the League or combination of tenants. On estates where some tenants have been unjustly evicted the others are paying their rents with punctuality, while they expect publicans and shopkeepers to boycott police or emergency men. No landlord should get one penny of rent anywhere or on any part of his estate, wherever situated, so long as he has one tenant unjustly evicted. Tenants should be the first to show their sympathy with each other, and prompt publicity should be given to every eviction, that the tenants of the evictor, wherever he holds property, may show their sympathy.



Such a policy indicates a fight which has no half-heartedness about it, and it is the only fight which will win."

Such was the Plan of Campaign, the issue of which was a turning-point in the history of the Irish cause, of the Dissident Liberals, and of the Government. It attracted but little notice at first, and such notice as it did receive was hostile. *The Times* described it as "a document of desperation." It could only be brought into actual operation when the November rents became due, and then everybody heard of it. *The Daily News* spoke of it as "vitiating by dishonesty." "To withhold just rents," it wrote, "because exorbitant demands are made, is to take trouble to be in the wrong. The scheme is one which attempts to cure a grievance of the tenants by inflicting a grievance on the landlords. It is doing injustice as a protest against injustice." The Irish advocates of the Plan replied that this would be quite true if just rents were ever withheld; but that the very essence and meaning of the scheme was that only exorbitant rents were to be touched. This was true, and had it been possible to provide some impartial tribunal which should decide what rents were exorbitant and what rents were just, no fault could have been found with the Plan nor with those who carried it out. Its defect was that it made the tenants judges in their own cause. But here, too, the Irish leaders had a plea in arrest of judgment. They attempted in Mr. Parnell's Tenants' Relief Bill to provide this impartial tribunal. The Government admitted that they had a case by appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the subject. The Opposition not only granted that relief was needful, but admitted and asserted with the Irish members that the need was urgent, and voted for their proposed method of promptly dealing with it. But a hostile Parliamentary majority refused to do what, by her representatives, Ireland had asked, and British Liberals had supported her in asking. The rejection of their proposal for relief left the tenants unprotected while a Commission was inquiring

what should be done to protect them. The urgency was for the winter that was upon them, and the Commission could not even report till the winter was over. In these circumstances, contended Mr. Dillon's friends, the tenants have organized a campaign to protect themselves, and there is no other Plan on which such a campaign can be carried out. The Plan of Campaign consequently held the field.

It is essential to the proper understanding of the political and social movements of the time that this matter should be looked at from the point of view of the tenants as well as from that of the landlords. An unscrupulous landlord, or a landlord who left everything in the hands of an agent, who looked on the matter in the dry cold light of mere business, had an interest in evicting a defaulting tenant. The threat of eviction was often used to force a tenant to buy his holding under the Ashbourne Act, at a valuation made on the basis of an exorbitant rent. Eviction, too, extinguished the tenant's rights, and put an end to the double ownership by transferring the tenant's share in it to the landlord. The tenants therefore regarded eviction as legalized robbery, and when the eviction was made for a rent which the tenant could not possibly pay, his view of its hardship and injustice was right. It was this view of the Plan of Campaign, as a league of the tenants for self-protection against gross and palpable injustice, which eventually prevailed among the great masses of the people of England, Scotland, and Wales. It was constantly asked why honest men supported and sanctioned a scheme that was "vitiating by dishonesty." They did so for the same reasons for which they had rejoiced over Portia's discomfiture of Shylock. No doubt the exorbitant rent, like Antonio's pound of flesh, was in the bond,

The court awards it, and the law doth give it ;  
and the Plan of Campaign, in its idea and principle, and in most cases in its actual working, said to the exacting landlord as Portia said to Shylock,

Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desir'st.

In the immense majority of cases the landlord yielded and took his reduced rent, and the Plan was not enforced. It was only carried out where the reduction was refused.

This refusal was only made in a comparatively few instances. The vast majority of the Irish landlords in most counties anticipated the operation of the Plan by voluntarily offering reductions in the ordinary rent, and very many of them by reducing even the judicial rent. They had begun to do this in May, they did it to a larger extent in November. A list of a hundred and fifty Irish landlords was made up by the Special Commissioner of *The Pall Mall Gazette*, from the announcements of reductions in the Irish newspapers. This list showed that the voluntary reductions made on the old rents, at the November rent collection, varied from ten to fifty per cent. The Marquis of Waterford had given back to his Waterford tenants from twenty-five to thirty-five per cent. ; Lord Lansdowne and Lord Ventry had done the same in Kerry, Lord James Butler had granted a reduction of thirty-seven and a half per cent. in Clare, and of twenty in Glenroe, while Major Sheehy, in Clonmore, the Rev. Henry Swanson in Charleville, Mr. Coppinger in Cork, and Mr. Brew in Querrin, had given back forty per cent., Lady Boyle at Freemount forty-seven and a half, and Mr. W. T. Littledale in Wicklow, fifty. Even in the judicial rents large remissions were announced. Lord Ventry's were twenty per cent., Colonel Vandeleur's in Clare, Mr. Vincent Scully's in Tipperary, Mr. Puxley's in Whitechurch, Mr. Francis T. Graham's in Letterfrack, Connemara, Mr. Coleman's and the Rev. T. Chute's in Killarney, Mr. Blacker Douglas's in Knockanare, and the Duke of Devonshire's in Waterford, were all lowered twenty-five per cent. Some of these landlords published their reasons for granting the reduction. They all amounted to the admission that the exceptionally low prices of stock and crops had made the payment of the full rent impossible. All over Ireland the best landlords were thus imitating the good landlords in England, and



refusing to exact rents which circumstances had made their tenants unable to pay. The local officials, and the government at Dublin Castle were everywhere commending this example to the more needy or more exacting of the landlord class, and in most cases they did so with success. It was stated that the visit of Captain Plunkett, divisional magistrate of Cork, Kerry, and Limerick to Clonakilty had resulted in the immediate settlement of the question of rent for the current year, by the grant of large reductions by nineteen of the landowners out of twenty-two.

These large reductions were naturally regarded by the friends of the tenants as fully justifying their demand for the universal application of the same principle. Only a small minority of the landlords in the whole of Ireland held out, and it was only on forty estates that during the winter of 1886 the Plan of Campaign was put in force. In some of these cases it failed to carry English public opinion with it, in others nobody hesitated to say that the landlord had got his deserts. Professor Stuart, speaking with reference to such cases at Darlington on the 20th of December, said that Liberals were called on by the other side to denounce Mr. Dillon and his friends for their Plan of Campaign, but he refused to do so. If there was illegality in the movement, there was moral justice at the bottom of it; and Mr. Stansfeld, speaking on the next day at Exeter, said that if the action of the tenants was said to be illegal, it was not therefore necessarily dishonest. The Government saw in it an opportunity for the exhibition of the vigour to which their friends were urging them. They had a Plan of Campaign of their own, in bringing all the pressure they could lawfully use to induce landlords to compromise with their tenants, and not to resort to evictions, at least till the winter was over. They brought Mr. Dillon before the Queen's Bench, and made him give security for good behaviour. In holding him to bail, however, all the judges bore testimony to the excellence of his intentions, and one of them, Mr. Justice Johnson, said the question was not as to



the purity or earnestness of Mr. Dillon's motives, but "the effect his speeches were likely to produce on the audience who heard them then and there, many of them stung with want, and many of them, no doubt, considering themselves face to face with ruin and despair." This prosecution was consequently a failure, though it proved the Plan of Campaign to be illegal. The Government, therefore, followed it up by making a descent at Loughrea on a rent collection under the Plan, seizing the money, and arresting Mr. Dillon, Mr. Matthew Harris, and Mr. William O'Brien, whom they indicted for conspiracy. The trial came on in February, 1887, the jury could not agree, and the prosecution failed. The Plan of Campaign, however, was declared to be an illegal conspiracy; and was eventually made the chief excuse for the new repressive policy on which the Government fell back in the ensuing Session.

A special Correspondent of *The Daily News*, who was present at a Nationalist rent-collecting at Lisacul near Castlerea, on the 6th of December, 1886, gave a description of the proceedings in carrying out the Plan of Campaign on the estate of Mr. Murphy. The tenants had asked for thirty per cent. reduction. The landlord and his agent, Mr. Whitby Lynch, offered fifteen, and as neither side would give way, the tenants adopted the Plan of Campaign. In an old schoolhouse the Correspondent found Mr. W. Redmond, M.P., and Mr. Fitzgibbon, a draper of Castlerea, sitting at a table in front of a peat fire. The room was half full of eager peasants, exactly of the class we know in England as harvest labourers, who were paying their rent. They went to the table one by one, bringing out their bags, purses, or paper packets from their pockets, unfolding them with trembling fingers, and putting down the precious notes or the hoarded coin. Some apologized for not bringing more, and asked for time, many paid up the whole seventy per cent. of their rent, and all received a note of acknowledgment, and the allowance for the landlord's half of what they had paid in rates. "I whispered

to Mr. Redmond," says the Correspondent, "the inquiry whether all the people understood what they were doing." The rent-collector submitted my question to the popular verdict. "This gentleman is from England," said he, "and some people over there think we are not very clever here. He wants to know if you understand what we are doing in this business." The answer was that they had an idea of it. "Do you know what will be done with this rent, and how it will be used if the landlord does not give the reduction?" persisted Mr. Redmond. "We have a good idea of it," was still the vague answer; but some one answered that the money would go to the evicted tenants. Mr. W. Redmond rejoined, "If the landlord accepts the reduction, he will get the money." "Certainly," said a voice, "if he starts to evict, the money will go to the evicted tenants." "That is the understanding we wished you to have." "And sure that is the understanding we pay it on, your honour," was the reply on several sides. A tenant whose half year's rent with thirty per cent. deducted, was sixteen shillings and tenpence, paid his money. "What is going to be done with this money, supposing Murphy or Mr. Lynch will not give the reduction?" he was asked. "My idea, sorr," answered the man, "is that, in case he does not take it, it will be in the fund that will relieve those he will evict out of their homes." "That's your clear understanding of it?" "It is, sorr." . . . One woman paid only ten shillings on account. She explained that even that sum she had borrowed from Father Martin for fear people should say she would not come in. She was asked to explain this expression. Did she not come in because she thought it right? "I was afeard that I would be put to any cost." "And you wanted to get protection like the rest?" "Yes, sorr, I was afeard of Whitby Lynch," the agent. "You were not afraid of your neighbours?" asked Mr. Fitzgibbon. "Faith, that's thrue, your honour."

The same Correspondent, writing from Carrick-on-

Shannon on the 17th of December, described some eviction scenes he had witnessed a day or two before on Lord Kingston's estate on the Arigna mountain, near Shannon's rise, on the border of Leitrim and Roscommon. "Imagine," he wrote, "two hundred police surrounding a small cot on the hill-side, below the junction of two ugly fissures in the soil. Nobody spoke favourably of the wild holding. The rent was only four pounds. The sum decreed for was six pounds, a year and a half's rent, due a year ago. The sheriff's costs, three pounds fifteen shillings, were now, of course, added. The besieged resident was a picture for a sympathetic artist. A little keen-eyed woman, with a petticoat of the coarsest flannel thrown over her shoulders, a coarse maroon-coloured skirt, and bare legs and feet. Her daughter, who might be nineteen years of age, was a lady by comparison. Her black dress, boots, orange-coloured neck ribbon, and her hair neatly tied back, were more in contrast with the miserable interior than the mother's garb. The son—a growing lad—was dressed like an ordinary farm labourer. "Are you going to pay?" said the sheriff. "I can't," said the widow, and order was given to clear the cottage. It was an easy task. A rickety structure of stained wood, combining open shelves and close cupboard, a small stool, an old chest with a few oats in it, some scanty bed clothing, a dish or two, and the turf fire, were soon got out by the emergency men. The widow, after many complaints, apparently of what she considered past exactions, sank into sullen silence until the boards of her humble bed were heard crashing up and came tumbling through the narrow opening which served for bedroom window. Then there was some agitation as to whether it should not be left unharmed as a fixture, but it was decided that the bed was not really fast to the wall, and the few old timbers continued to fly out. The poor woman's stock, consisting of a small calf, a pig, and two goats, were driven on to other land. To complete the formal eviction a straw from the thatch was given by the sheriff to the bailiff. The door-



way and windows were built up with stones. The widow was privately warned that if she attempted re-entry she would be liable to imprisonment for a criminal offence, and the two hundred police were marched away over the river to another part of the mountain." [*Daily News*, 18th December, 1886.]

When the men who thus represented the beauty and benignity of English law had gone, the peasant's neighbours crowded round the dispossessed widow to express their sympathy! "Sure, why wouldn't ye be in again, Bridget," said one, "wouldn't ye as soon be in a gaol as in the back of a ditch?" "There now," said another, making a furtive dash at the stones in the doorway and pulling some of them down, "the stones are falling down, why wouldn't ye go in?" The widow had explained to the on-looking stranger from London that her cow had died, and she had not been able to pay rent since December, 1884, two years since, when an extra pound and sixpence had been wrung from her for costs. The Correspondent proceeds:—"Searching for receipts she disclosed the recesses of her cupboard, but there was no sign of money or food in them, as far as I could see. In order to make the search she had to let go her apron, in which she had been cherishing something all through the trouble of the eviction. 'I've got my cateen (little cat) here,' she explained with a smile, forgetting her cares for a moment while she laughed with her neighbours. They on their part were all ready with sympathetic offers of aid to rid her tenderly of this embarrassment. It was touching to see the comical air of bravado with which they conceived and executed the daring plot of putting the kitten back into the building they dared not themselves enter. 'Put in the pig now,' said an eager neighbour. This was a clever consolatory touch, for the poor woman's heart was obviously in her animals, and she had a special tenderness for the pig. When telling me of her stock her eyes brightened at the mention of the little porker, and she proudly exclaimed, 'It's a little pig I got from beyant



Keadire,' but the pig was not so little as to go in without pulling down too many of the stones built up by the bailiffs, and, in spite of the advice of the bolder neighbours, Bridget was not anxious to offer any open insult to the law. Of money for the rent she declared she had not a halfpenny, but added rather defiantly, 'If I had it it's not to Tatlow I'd be giving it; but I'd have a pair of boots for myself first.' I afterwards heard that she took temporary refuge in an empty disused house farther up the mountain."

The story of these evictions, and of others that were carried out during the autumn, exerted a strong influence on public feeling. Early in the new year came the evictions which called forth the indignant protest of the Cardiff meeting recorded in the previous chapter. Thursday, the 6th of January, was a cold winter day in Kerry, with showers of hail falling all day long. On this day a small party of police and emergency men went to Cappagh, a wild place between Creehane mountain and Gortdronikerry, to evict a couple of tenants on the estate of Mr. H. A. Herbert. Several mountain torrents had to be crossed before the first house was reached. It was a cottage inhabited by Robert Leary with his wife and nine children, standing in a rough, wild valley, with a few bits of cultivated land around it, one of those small oases rescued from the desert from which "economic rent" had long disappeared. Leary had made a little money in California, and had spent it all in cultivating some three acres of his holding, for which his rent was £22 a year. He was therefore supposed to be able to pay, and was held to his bond. He asked to be allowed to go into the Land Court to have a fair rent fixed, but the agent would not hear of it. When the evicting party got to the house they found the half-clothed children crowded round a peat fire, and the evictors themselves were deeply touched by their cries as they saw the scanty furniture of their little home turned out and piled in a heap upon the road. Leary and his wife remonstrated, and asked to be allowed to take shelter in an out-

house, but this could not be permitted. The whole family were turned out of doors in a storm of hail, and the poor woman, with a child two years old in her arms, and three bareheaded children, one of whom carried the baby, crouched for shelter under the lee of the pile of their household goods. The only other house within three miles was Thomas Looney's, where the other eviction took place, and poor Leary and his family were left to shift as best they could for the winter night. This Looney, like poor Leary, was penniless, with an aged father of eighty and with seven children. They, too, were all turned out into the field, and not even the poor old crippled grandfather of the little ones could be allowed to stay the night in the dwelling from which the law and the landlord had cast them out. When the Correspondent of *The Cork Examiner*, who had witnessed these proceedings, left the place in the afternoon, Looney was making a shelter for the old man and the children by piling his furniture against an outhouse wall.

But it was in the valley of Glenbeigh, on the estate of Mr. Rowland Winn, midway between the towns of Killorglin and Cahirceveen, that the worst scenes of the winter occurred. The estate had, it was said, fallen into the hands of money-lenders, who determined to get the rent Mr. Winn had been unable to collect. A party of six emergency bailiffs, accompanied by the agent and protected by fifty police, set out from Killorglin in the morning of the 11th of January to begin the work. They went first to Patrick Reardon's at Droum, in a wild glen three miles beyond Glenbeigh. His rent was four pounds ten shillings, and he had nothing wherewith to pay. He told the agent he could not pay, and was ordered out of the house at once, as it was to be burned. He had scarcely got out his furniture when the emergency men fired the roof, and after it was burned, pulled down the walls. Thomas Burke's was taken next. His rent was four pounds nineteen shillings, but since economic rent had disappeared his

wife supported his children chiefly by begging. Fire was applied as before, but the thatch would not burn, and the agent ordered the house to be pulled down, which was done at once. The inmates of the poor home were half-naked and wretchedly thin, and their distress moved the neighbours, who had already gathered in a crowd, to such indignation that it was only with great difficulty they were kept from attacking the officers. Thomas Diggin the next victim was a little better off. He still had four cows, and his judicial rent was eight pounds. His daughter, a servant in Limerick, had just sent a remittance, and his wife came forward and offered the money—it was all she had—to the remorseless agent. The Sheriff's deputy—who hated the work he was obliged to do,—urged the agent to take the money, but he refused, and the roof was fired, the deputy sheriff driving away in disgust. Patrick Diggin, an old man of seventy, came out of the house with a grandchild in his arms, and wandered aimlessly up the glen. Thomas Diggin's wife fainted and fell, and a roar of indignation went up from the helpless crowd. Mr. E. Harrington coming up at the moment appealed to them to be patient; and a sergeant collected from the police and others a small sum for the evicted people.

The same scenes were repeated on succeeding days, and on Tuesday the 18th of January five members of Parliament, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Theodore Fry, Mr. E. Harrington, Mr. Pierce Mahony, and Mr. J. D. Sheehan, telegraphed to Sir M. Hicks-Beach at Dublin Castle, asking him to come and see for himself the inhuman work which was being done in the name of the Government. Two days later the Chief Secretary sent back a wholly unsympathetic reply. Meanwhile public opinion had been aroused. The thing had not been done in a corner, for the English people were looking on. The terrible details of these legalized atrocities were described by a special Correspondent of *The Daily News*, and a feeling of lively indignation sprang up among Liberals all over the country.



Meetings were held and votes of thanks were passed to *The Daily News* for letting in the light of day upon these dark places of the Kingdom. These protests were not confined to the Liberal party. *The Standard*, writing of these facts which could not be questioned, said, "There are, beyond all question, cases—and such cases bring shame and discredit not only on those concerned in them, but on the whole body of the landlords—in which the owners of property have not behaved with any show of respect for the common principles of equity, and have done gross wrong to those whose happiness, whose lives even, depended on their forbearance. Such landlords have no right to be supplied by the Government with the means of carrying out the decrees granted to them by process of law. Some of the evictions which have already taken place this winter—we do not care to specify them—have been inhuman spectacles, fit only for a barbarous country and a barbarous age. They revolt the consciences of men influenced by feelings of sympathy for the suffering poor." Mr. Chamberlain said, "These peasants themselves deserve our pity, and more than that, an immediate remedy. We are told that in this case no landlord is to blame, that the proceedings are taken by a money-lender in London, but I say that any law which permits any man to turn out the aged and the sick, shelterless and foodless, on the bleak hill-side in this inclement weather, is a bad law, and ought to be abrogated." These declarations from the two wings of the Ministerial Coalition satisfied the consciences of those who made them. The priest and the Levite who saw the man who had fallen among thieves and passed by on the other side probably made similar protests when they mentioned the matter to their friends. It was, to Mr. Chamberlain, "a monstrous and deliberate inaccuracy" to say that Mr. Parnell's Tenants' Relief Bill would have helped these tenants at Glenbeigh, for they could not have paid the fifty per cent. that Bill required. The fifty per cent. was not reduction enough for them, yet Mr. Chamberlain had joined

in refusing it to them as to others, and when the proposal was made it was denounced by those whom he supported as confiscation and robbery. In this same speech, moreover, Mr. Chamberlain spoke of the Plan of Campaign, which was demanding twenty-five and thirty per cent. reduction, in almost similar cases, as "the most immoral and dishonest conspiracy which had ever been devised in a civilized country."

The attitude of the Tory-Liberal Coalition towards these evictions was a striking illustration of the difference between the two classes of politicians. *The Standard* could say, in a moment of true feeling, that such landlords as those of Glenbeigh had no right to be supplied by the Government with the means of carrying out the decrees granted to them by process of law ; but the Tory Chief Secretary had replied to the remonstrance of the five Liberal and Irish members that "the police are only protecting the owners in the necessary enforcement of their rights." That was the true Tory view. Legal rights must over-ride human claims. "Any sufferings that result," said the Chief Secretary in the telegram, "must be regarded as already due to others." According to the official view, these poor tenants had been persuaded not to pay their rents, according to Mr. Chamberlain they could not possibly have paid even the fifty per cent. Mr. Parnell had proposed. Mr. Chamberlain was right. But there were estates all over Ireland where economic rent had almost equally disappeared, yet where the tenants had scraped together from their other earnings, or from the wages of their daughters in domestic service, or from the contributions of relatives in the United States and Canada, fifty and even seventy per cent. of their rents. They offered these rents to the landlords, although the land had utterly ceased to yield them, and where the landlords refused to receive them, and made only paltry concessions or insisted on their full legal rights, the tenants agreed together not to pay at all. To Mr. Chamberlain and to the Tory officials whom he supported, this was "the

most immoral and dishonest conspiracy which had ever been devised in a civilized country." To the great masses of the English and the Irish people, in whom considerations of humanity are more sacred than legal rights, it was a combination of the weak to resist the oppression of the strong, a defiance of and passive resistance to a law which Mr. Chamberlain said ought to be abrogated, which even *The Standard* said no Government should enforce; while both Mr. Chamberlain and *The Standard* were actively supporting a Chief Secretary who declared, that in carrying it out in the worst and extremest case of all, the police were "only protecting the owners in the necessary enforcement of their rights."

This striking divergence of feeling between Mr. Chamberlain and his old Liberal allies was already beginning to set a great gulf between him and them. The English people were beginning to regard the Irish tenants and the Irish representatives in Parliament in a new light. Mr. Chamberlain and his friends persistently looked at them in the old way as men with "a double dose of Original Sin." In the speech in which Mr. Chamberlain rebuked the evictors of Glenbeigh, he spoke of the Irish members as "well-paid patriots who one and all, from the highest to the lowest, have made a good thing out of this agitation, and who divide in secret amongst themselves the proceeds of American subscriptions, while they vote in public infinitesimal sums in aid of the starving peasants whom their counsels have reduced to ruin." This was the Tory and Dissident Liberal view of the Irish members. But the Liberals, and vast numbers of unpolitical English people, were fast finding out that Mr. Dillon was a high-minded Irish gentleman, who had made, and was making, great sacrifices for the Irish cause, that Mr. T. M. Sullivan was a man of poetic feeling and culture, inspired by the noblest motives, and that many other of these "well-paid patriots" were finding, in the satisfaction given by disinterested public work, the sole reward of constant self-



denial and sacrifice. This revised estimate, this saner view, this more just and generous judgment of the Irish people and their representatives, naturally widened the breach between the Liberals and all those who adhered to the traditional opinion. More and more as the Irish people became better known by their English and Scottish fellow-countrymen did the old scornful and contemptuous treatment of them, to which the Tories and Dissident Liberals adhered, become intolerable. There could be no approach to reunion between men to whom the Irish race was anathema, and men who recognized their noble qualities, and were resolved to treat them as social equals and political friends. This divergence of feeling, skilfully worked upon and widened by the campaign of calumny which had already begun, drove the Dissident Liberals eventually to vote for the Coercion they had forsworn, and made the Liberal party feel that reconciliation and renewed co-operation were neither possible nor desirable between it and them.

## CHAPTER IX

*THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE.*

THE Round Table Conference was a proposal of Mr. Chamberlain's. On the 23rd of December he attended a meeting of the West Birmingham Divisional Council of the Liberal Association, to explain his action to his constituents. The time was propitious to Liberal reunion. It was the evening of the day on which Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation had been announced. In Mr. Chamberlain's view this startling event had wholly transformed the political outlook, and produced what he described as an extraordinary and critical situation. Lord Randolph Churchill, whose public utterances Mr. Chamberlain said he had watched very carefully, had risen superior to the old Tory traditions, "and I will say to you," said Mr. Chamberlain to this group of his constituents, "that his position in the present Government has been to me a guarantee that they would not pursue a reactionary policy." Now the guarantee was gone. Lord Randolph Churchill "who had shown a desire to redistribute the burdens of taxation between rich and poor," had resigned, and had given as the reason for his resignation that he was unable to support the extravagant military estimates of his colleagues, and could not approve of the legislative measures about to be presented to Parliament, which he regarded as "inadequate to the necessities of the situation." This, to Mr. Chamberlain, was a very significant announcement. He thought it possible, he feared it was

even probable, that the old Tory influences had gained the upper hand in the Government, and that they might be face to face with a Tory Government whose proposals no consistent Liberal would be able to support. "I ask myself," said Mr. Chamberlain, "in view of this startling change in the situation, 'What are the Gladstonian Liberals going to do?' It seems to me," he continued, "they have a great and perhaps a final opportunity. We Liberals are agreed on ninety-nine points of our programme. We only disagree upon one." Even on the Irish Land Question they were almost at one. "There is the real grievance of Ireland, there is the real problem we have to solve, and believe me, gentlemen," said Mr. Chamberlain, "without solving this Land Question, Home Rule is impossible, and I believe that if you solve it, Home Rule will be unnecessary. Are we," he asked, "far apart upon the principles which ought to guide a settlement of the land question? I think not. . . . I am convinced that sitting round a table and coming together in a spirit of compromise and conciliation, almost any three men, leaders of the Liberal Party, although they may hold opposite views upon another branch of the question, would yet be able to arrange some scheme."

This was the suggestion out of which the Round Table Conference grew. Mr. Chamberlain proceeded to say that he could go even further than this in the direction of unity. Even on the question of local government, he said, "the difference recedes if you come to think of it." They were all agreed as to the system of local government in England and Scotland, and that in principle the same system should be applied to Ireland. "We are prepared," he said, "none more so than I, to decentralize the system of administration known as Dublin Castle. . . . We are prepared to give any extension you can ask of what is purely municipal government, and it is not until we have done all this that we reach the debatable ground upon which, at present, at all events, agreement is impossible." Why not, therefore,



work together as far as they could? why carry on an internecine strife for the benefit of their opponents when there was so much good work to be done upon which they were agreed? "Is it not possible," Mr. Chamberlain continued, "now once more that we may make an honest attempt, if not to agree upon every point, at least to agree upon this: that we will proceed to carry out all these vast changes, all these important reforms upon which there is no difference, and that we will leave it to time and to experience, and to free and frank discussion to say whether, when we have accomplished all these, we shall not go one step further in the direction of the views of those who now unfortunately are our opponents?"

This appeal met with immediate response. The Liberal party greeted it as an Eirenicon; the Tories regarded it as the signal for a storm. *The Times* said of it that it made advances to the Gladstonians which, "if the latter were in a position to purge themselves of their heresies, might lead to a partial reconciliation." The proposal for a Coalition Cabinet was again urged, and Mr. Chamberlain was told that the Tory party was willing to go a long way even with such Radicals as he. Mr. H. H. Fowler, speaking on the 28th of December, welcomed Mr. Chamberlain's speech as an honest and honourable attempt to reunite and strengthen the Liberal party. At a meeting of the Radical Union, held at Birmingham on the 30th, strong approval was expressed of Lord Hartington's refusal to enter a Coalition Cabinet, and it was agreed that while Mr. Chamberlain's speech offered the basis of a reasonable compromise with the Liberal party, he had gone to the limit of what was reasonable. Mr. Labouchere, however, contended that Mr. Chamberlain's olive branch only amounted to an offer to rejoin the Liberals if they would repudiate Home Rule and adopt the scheme of National or Provincial Councils. On the 3rd of January *The Daily News* announced that steps were being taken to bring about the Round Table sittings which Mr. Chamberlain had suggested, and on the

next day the following letter from Mr. Gladstone to Sir William Harcourt was published :—

HAWARDEN CASTLE,

2nd January, 1887.

MY DEAR HARCOURT,

As I wrote to you some days ago, I consider the recent speech of Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham to be an important fact, of which due account ought to be taken. I think that, if handled on all sides in a proper spirit, it ought to lead to what I might term a *modus vivendi* in the Liberal Party. I should be very glad if any means could be found for bringing about a free discussion of the points of difference, with a view to arrive at some understanding for such common action as may be consistent with our respective principles, or at least, of reducing to a minimum the divergence of opinion on the Irish question in its several parts and branches.

Having, as you may remember, spoken in this sense when you were here some weeks ago, I shall not excite your surprise by retaining the opinion, now that some encouragement has been given to it by an occurrence such as the recent speech by Mr. Chamberlain, and I think that, if such a consultation is to take place, it is desirable that there should be no concealment about it, because rumour in these cases easily springs up and travels fast to untrue and premature conclusions.

You are therefore at liberty to make such use of this letter as you may think proper.

Believe me, sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

The Conference met at Sir William Harcourt's house on the 13th of January. It consisted of five members, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir George Trevelyan, and Lord Herschell. They sat for two days and then adjourned till after the meeting of Parliament. The proceedings were not published, but a very hopeful feeling prevailed about them among the Liberals, and a corresponding alarm on the side of the Government. Even Mr. Labouchere, speaking at Lowestoft on the 21st of January, said he hoped Mr. Chamberlain would come back to the fold. On the 22nd there was a great meeting at Hawick to console Sir George Trevelyan in his defeat by the presentation of his portrait. In receiving it, Sir George Trevelyan made an important

conciliatory speech, and at a great public meeting in the evening Mr. Chamberlain said that the hopes with which he had entered the Conference were confirmed and strengthened by what had taken place. He was convinced that every man present at the Conference, and those who were directly or indirectly represented in it—an indirect reference to Mr. Gladstone—were sincerely desirous of carrying agreement to the utmost possible limits, consistent with the maintenance of principles which they regarded as fundamental. He discussed in some detail the Home Rule proposal, suggested that Ireland might stand to the Imperial Parliament as the Canadian Provinces and Parliaments stand to the Dominion Parliament, and quoted Mr. Justin McCarthy's approval of this precedent. "In these circumstances," he added, "I do not dismiss as absolutely impossible the hypothesis that the time may shortly come when we shall all be once again a happy family." This speech created some consternation in the Ministerial ranks. If an agreement was come to, and Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan went back, and the large Radical section of the Dissident Liberals returned to the fold with them, the Coalition might be broken up. On the Liberal side there was the greatest satisfaction at the turn things seemed to be taking, and for a time there was in both sections of the Liberals full willingness and desire to effect a lasting re-union.

The prospect continued to be favourable when Parliament met, and the promise of an Irish Coercion Bill in the Queen's Speech showed that the Tories in the Cabinet had got their way. The world was curious to learn what effect this proposal would have on the Radical Seceders. Would it promote their quick return? On the Saturday after the Session had opened Mr. Chamberlain addressed his constituents, Mr. Henry Payton in the chair. His constituents enthusiastically adopted a resolution of confidence in their member, to which they added with great unanimity the expression of a hope that his efforts to restore the unity



of the Liberal party, and to forward a just settlement of the Irish question, might be crowned with success. Mr. Chamberlain, in a careful and well-considered speech in reply, said he was still hopeful, though he seemed a little ruffled by some whom he called "political mischief-makers, Mother Carey's chickens" who "blow from borough to borough and from constituency to constituency, and are endeavouring to compel the Unionist Liberals into submission by threatening them with political extinction." But these people did not affect his desire for reunion. "Let there be no mistake," he said; "we are anxious, we are eager, for reunion. We are willing to go a long way to meet our former friends. We have laid ourselves open to much misconception by making the first advance, but there are limits to the concessions which can be made, which can be demanded of us, and unless there is an equal reasonableness on the part of our former friends, upon their shoulders must rest the responsibility of the further disaster and confusion which will fall upon the Liberal party." He sketched the outlines of some concessions he would make, and then turned to the social war in Ireland, speaking with his old bitterness of the Irish peasants; and intimating his willingness to support the Government in the "amending and strengthening of the law" for which it asked. In the next week Lord Hartington went to Newcastle, and spoke on the Round Table Conference among other things. Conciliation was in the air, and he should be happy indeed if a national settlement of the Irish problem could be arrived at. But the time had not yet come. There would be dangers in the attempt now being made to reunite the Liberal party, if men less firm and clear than Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan were conducting the negotiations. "For myself," said Lord Hartington, "I have taken no part in them. I wish them well; I wish them every measure of success, and I will be the first, if success should crown their efforts, to acknowledge the glory and the merit which will attach to every one who has



been concerned in them." His duty was, he thought, to stay at home and guard their position and keep a watch on the movements of the enemy. Sir Henry James, at a Conference of his party held at Manchester in the first week in February, was less conciliatory. It was impossible, he said, to hand over Ireland to the mercy of the men who had originated and were carrying out the Plan of Campaign.

Mr. Chamberlain's speech to his constituents had made some difficulty in the continuation of the Round Table Conference. His hope for the restoration of Liberal unity seemed to be based on the assumption that the majority of the party were going to yield to the minority. Some correspondence followed, and Sir William Harcourt afterwards said that a breach was mainly averted by the good offices of Sir George Trevelyan's hospitality. The members of the Conference met at dinner at Sir George Trevelyan's house on the 14th of February, and the discussions were so friendly and the agreement so close that they separated with the highest hopes of a favourable result. "We never were on more cordial terms or nearer to an agreement," said Sir William Harcourt. It is generally admitted that among the points agreed upon were the establishment of a statutory Parliament in Dublin, with subordinate powers limited and defined in the Act on which it rested, with an Irish executive Government, dependent on the Irish legislature, for the administration of the business devolved by the Imperial Parliament on the Irish Government. The representation of Ireland in the Imperial Parliament was to be continued. So far, agreement was come to. The separate or special treatment of Ulster, if Ulster wished for it; the question how far the Irish Government or the Imperial Government were to be responsible for the police, for the maintenance of order and for the administration of justice, were points on which no agreement had been arrived at, but all were regarded as in a fair way for settlement.

In these circumstances Mr. Chamberlain wrote an article

which was published in *The Baptist*, on Welsh Disestablishment, in which he at once reverted to his old complaints against Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy. After expressing his strong sympathy with the Welsh in their desire for disestablishment, he told them that if in giving Mr. Gladstone twenty-three members out of thirty at the last election they had meant to approve his Irish policy, "then they have no right whatever to complain of the delay of their hopes, and they must wait patiently until the country has changed its mind, and is prepared to hand over the minority in Ireland to the tender mercies of Mr. Parnell and the Irish League." Nor would they wait alone. "The Crofters of Scotland and the agricultural labourers of England will keep them company. Thirty-two millions of people must go without much-needed legislation because three millions are disloyal, while nearly six hundred members of the Imperial Parliament will be reduced to forced inactivity because some eighty delegates, representing the policy and receiving the pay of the Chicago convention, are determined to obstruct all business until their demands have been conceded." The rest of the article was in the same spirit as these extracts, though it concluded with a reference to the necessary work of reconciliation in which some of the former leaders of the Liberal party were now engaged. The effect of this article was to convince the Liberals that no reconciliation with Mr. Chamberlain was possible. The leaders might still cherish the hope of reunion, but their followers would none of it. The leaders might pass it over as an outbreak of ill-temper ; but the great body of the party regarded it as fatal. They contended now, that what Mr. Chamberlain wanted was not a compromise, but a submission, not concessions by "the former leaders of the Liberal party," to which he and his friends would respond by large and generous advances, but an admission that "the former leaders" were leaders no longer, and the adoption of a new policy with a change of chiefs.

The next number of *The Baptist* contained a brief reply

by Mr. Gladstone to one point in Mr. Chamberlain's article. Mr. Gladstone merely pointed out that those who wished to have a great Welsh question discussed in a practical way should first clear the road; that he had not said Ireland ought to occupy Parliament to the exclusion of British questions, but only that it would, and would not be deferred, that it was a question of social order, and that it was in the nature of such questions to push their claims to precedence. "I am not creating a difficulty," said Mr. Gladstone, "but only pointing it out. The finger-post does not make the road." At a meeting at the Devonshire Club on the 2nd of March, Sir George Trevelyan still spoke hopefully of reunion, and in writing to the Liberal Unionist Committee of Aberdeen he told them that the Irish question must be dealt with thoroughly, radically, and remedially, that it could only be so dealt with by a reunited Liberal party, and that for such reunion on terms honourable to all concerned he believed the moment to be ripe. "The opinions on practical points of the problem, held by leading Liberals with whom I am acquainted," he added, "are such as, I am satisfied, admit of our working together without any of us losing respect for each other or for ourselves." A fortnight later Sir George Trevelyan went with Mr. Caine to a meeting at Liskeard, where a purse of four hundred sovereigns was presented to Mr. Courtney. It was a thoroughly Liberal Dissident gathering, and Sir George Trevelyan in no way dissociated himself from them. He said Mr. Gladstone's Bills were acknowledged to be dead, though their principle survived, but he hinted that they must be replaced, as sooner or later they would be, "by a scheme agreed upon by the leading men of all the sections of the party." In another speech he spoke of the Round Table Conference, and said that one of its objects was "to try and find whether the two sections of the party could agree in a common policy to be applied to Ireland," and described one result of it as being that those who joined in it determined, as far as possible, to leave off using



irritating words and writing irritating things, and to speak with kindness of those who were brother Liberals before and would, he hoped, before long be brother Liberals again.

By this time, however, the Round Table Conference was at an end. Sir William Harcourt wrote to Mr. Chamberlain, telling him Mr. Gladstone's view of the article in *The Baptist* and suggesting that the Conference should be suspended till the storm raised by it had blown over. No more was done, and in the second week in March Mr. Chamberlain broke the negotiations off. Their influence, however, remained. The very fact that such negotiations were going on, the discussions to which they gave rise, and the few details of the conciliatory suggestions which leaked out, smoothed the way of large numbers of Liberals in the constituencies to return to active co-operation with their former friends. To so large an extent had this reconciliation and reunion shown itself that at the great dinner on the 9th of March, when a purse of ten thousand guineas was presented to Mr. Schnadhorst, reunion was felt to be, as it were, in the air. Mr. Schnadhorst in returning thanks expressed the strongest confidence in the reunion of the party. Referring especially to Sir George Trevelyan's speech at the Devonshire Club, he said that during the whole of the recent painful controversy Sir George had never uttered a single bitter sentence, and that if the spirit which animated his speech and himself permeated the whole Liberal party the result they all desired would soon be achieved. Mr. Schnadhorst concluded by saying that it was necessary for the leaders to make haste or the party would unite without them. Every by-election showed that they were coming together again in order to annihilate their proper and natural foes. It was on this same evening that Sir George Trevelyan, meeting Mr. Chamberlain at an evening party—an engagement which enabled Mr. Chamberlain to write an apology for his absence from Mr. Schnadhorst's dinner—learned from him that he did not



intend to go any further with the Conference. Sir George Trevelyan, himself, had been convinced by what he heard at the Round Table, that his own objections to the Land Bill and the Home Rule Bill had been practically removed, that no real obstacle of principle stood in the way of reunion, and though he still hesitated to act without his old companions in dissent, when it became obvious that they did not intend to return, he went back alone.

It was not, however, till some other overtures for peace had been rejected that Sir George Trevelyan gave up all hope of the friends with whom he had acted in the Home Rule debates, the Home Rule division, and the Home Rule election. In a great speech at Swansea, on the 4th of June, Mr. Gladstone once more held out the olive branch. "A man whose name I would mention with honour, Sir George Trevelyan, has, I believe, suggested that it would be very desirable, with a view to that reunion of the Liberal Party, which we all greatly desire, that some conference should take place between Lord Hartington and myself, or some person acting on my behalf. I accept the suggestion freely and cordially. I do not think I am in a position to make a proposal to Lord Hartington, for this reason: that on the last occasion, when I had a communication with him with regard to Irish affairs, I found him indisposed to admit that he ever assented to the constitution of any assembly qualified, under however strict conditions, to act for the whole of Ireland. I know not what is his present state of mind on the subject, but I think that, after finding him in such a condition as that, it would be an impertinence in me to suggest such a conference. At the same time, if Lord Hartington should indicate a willingness or desire for such a conference, he would find in me the readiest response. I should feel confident that no harm could result from it; whatever good might result would be the work of a man perfectly honest, perfectly unselfish, and perfectly plain, and I should feel on safe ground in conferring with him." This was the last open-

ing of the door to possible reconciliation. Like earlier invitations to the Dissident Liberal leaders, it was made in vain. Lord Hartington still regarded himself as a Liberal, but he was pledged to the support of a Tory Government, and he made no response to Mr. Gladstone's appeal. There was now no looking back for the Dissident Liberals. They had supported the Tory Coercion Bill, and the Liberals spoke of them and felt towards them as Liberals no longer. Sir George Trevelyan regarded Lord Hartington's refusal to entertain Mr. Gladstone's suggestion as a distinct breaking with the Liberal Party. He told the Liberals of Glasgow that he felt humiliated and indignant, and, when Lord Hartington wrote a letter in favour of the Tory candidate in the North Paddington election, he saw that the contest was no longer over the details of the Irish Bill, but between Liberal and Conservative Government. Many other Liberals, who had hesitated in 1886, had the same conviction forced upon them. They said, with Sir George Trevelyan, that their objections to the Land Bill and the Irish Government Bill had been met ; that a workable compromise had been come to, and that the Liberals who wished to give Ireland self-government had now nothing about which to quarrel. Their leaders might form the closest coalition with the Tories, they might support a Tory Government in Parliament, and Tory candidates in the constituencies, but such a proceeding was, in their view, political apostasy. So, like Sir George Trevelyan, and from the same motives as he, they abandoned their position of critical isolation, chose Home Rule rather than Coercion, as soon as it was shown that no middle course was possible, and resumed their old cordial relations of sympathy and co-operation with their Liberal friends.

## CHAPTER X.

*FALLING BACK ON COERCION.*

THE Jubilee year did not open auspiciously for Lord Salisbury's Government. On the last day of the old year Lord Hartington communicated to the Prime Minister his final refusal to join the Ministry, either as its chief or as leader of the House of Commons. Lord Salisbury had meanwhile turned to Mr. Goschen, and offered him the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Mr. Goschen hesitated. He was reluctant to cross the floor, and face his old colleagues from among a group of Conservative Ministers, but the objection which stood in Lord Hartington's way did not apply to him. The Tories had threatened to revolt if Lord Salisbury put Lord Hartington in his own place as chief; but they were ready to welcome Mr. Goschen as a valuable ally, if he would consent to serve. Mr. Goschen consented at length, and the idea of a Coalition Cabinet was again entertained. There was a talk of Lord Northbrook and Lord Lansdowne joining the Ministry, and seats in the Cabinet were offered to them. But the attitude of the Tories was not encouraging, and they declined. Mr. Goschen was the only nominal Liberal who went over, and he did so on the distinct understanding that he preserved his Liberalism, and only represented in the Cabinet the Liberal group of which Lord Hartington was the chief, by whose favour and support the Government lived. His appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, did not meet the whole case of the Government.



Lord Randolph Churchill, whom Mr. Goschen now succeeded, had led the House of Commons, and the Tories insisted on having a leader from among themselves. To the surprise of the outside world, the choice fell on Mr. W. H. Smith. This was regarded as a practical confession of weakness. *Punch* wrote, as "A Troubled Tory's suggestion,"—

Our Randolph we've lost, and we cannot get Harty,  
A Leader we *must* have, with power and pith ;  
Well, it seems to need *welding*, the Unionist party ;  
One might have a worse than a Smith.

Mr. W. H. Smith, as a man of business, had been successful in administrative work, and was destined to prove that patience and good temper are better than genius in a leader of the House of Commons.

The reconstruction of the Ministry was the occasion of a good deal of heart-burning. Lord Iddesleigh who, as Sir Stafford Northcote, had led the House of Commons when Mr. Disraeli was raised to the House of Lords, and had led the Conservative party in the Liberal Parliament of 1880, was unceremoniously pushed aside. He had, in the words of his biographer, Mr. Andrew Lang, "with his wonted unselfishness, placed his seat in the Cabinet at the Premier's disposal." He had done this in order to facilitate the arrangements for bringing in the Whig Lords with Mr. Goschen, and forming a Coalition Cabinet. On Tuesday morning, the 4th of January, he saw in the newspapers that his resignation had been accepted, and that Lord Salisbury would become Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in his place. He was at home at Pynes, near Exeter, and as the post had brought him no communication on a matter which had been known in London newspaper offices the night before, the announcement came upon him as a blow. In the afternoon a cypher telegram from Lord Salisbury, which must have been sent off long after all the world had learned the fact it communicated,

told him of the new arrangements that had been made, and on the next morning a letter followed to the same effect. Lord Iddesleigh replied that he cheerfully accepted Lord Salisbury's decision. Lord Salisbury at once telegraphed again, offering him the Presidency of the Council. "Not being anxious 'to have more political bother,' he declined," his biographer says, "and continued to decline after receiving a kind letter from Lord Salisbury." Everybody felt that Lord Iddesleigh had been badly treated, and *The Standard* felt it needful to announce, a day or two later, that he was extremely ill and dejected, and suffered from the work of the Foreign Office. This was entirely untrue, and his biographer shows that, so far from being ill, he felt full power and readiness for work. On the 11th of January he went from Pynes to London in order to speak at the Mansion House on the next day, at a meeting on behalf of the Imperial Institute. In the morning of the 12th he went to the Foreign Office, and saw the Under-Secretary, Sir James Fergusson. He then walked to Downing Street to see Lord Salisbury, who was expecting him at a quarter to three, and was shown into the ante-room, while the attendant went forward to announce him. The moment the messenger had left him, Lord Iddesleigh sank into a chair with a loud groan, which at once brought Mr. Henry Manners to his side. He was carried to a sofa in the Prime Minister's room, but never recovered consciousness, and died at five minutes past three in the presence of two doctors, of Lord Salisbury, and of Mr. Henry Manners. It is enough to say of him in the words of a poem published in *The Daily News* on the day after his death,—

"A very perfect, gentle knight  
In fields whence Chivalry has fled,  
He lived in honour's clearest light,  
He lies with England's noblest dead.  
Flouted, and thrust aside, his life  
Shamed those who passed him in the strife."

Meanwhile Mr. Goschen had accepted the invitation of the Conservative and Dissident Liberal Committees, to fight for the seat in the Exchange division of Liverpool, rendered vacant by the death of Mr. David Duncan, a Liberal who had won it from the Conservatives at the General Election by a majority of 170. In his election address Mr. Goschen described himself as "a Liberal all my life," who had rallied to the Government of Lord Salisbury "with the cordial concurrence of Lord Hartington and of the great majority of the Liberal Unionist party." "The Union," he said, "is our watchword. I have broken some cherished ties in order to take up my post at that point of the line of battle where Lord Salisbury, and the leader of the Liberal Unionists, thought that I could render most effectual service. I do not conceal from myself that, in voting for me, some of you also may be sacrificing life-long habits and traditions. But I ask you to make that sacrifice for the sake of our common cause." On the 15th Mr. Goschen was present at a Cabinet Council, the first in the new year, and on the 18th, the day of Lord Iddesleigh's funeral, he addressed his supporters in Liverpool. He had come there, he said, to win a seat for the Union. He hinted at a possible Coercion Bill, declared that the Chief Secretary's lenient enforcement of the law had been met by an increase of agitation and the Plan of Campaign, and blamed Liberal statesmen for not protesting against and denouncing it. Mr. Ralph Neville, on the other hand, put Home Rule to the front in his address, and it was exclusively on the Home Rule question the election turned. The polling took place on the 26th, the day before Parliament met, and Mr. Neville was returned by a majority of seven. As Mr. Goschen could not win a seat for the Union the Government had to find one for him. So, early in February, Lord Algernon Percy accepted from Mr. Goschen's hands the sham appointment which involved the vacating of a safe Tory seat for the borough of St. George, Hanover Square. Mr. Goschen at once issued an address

in which he utterly ignored his Liberalism, and came forward as a member of Lord Salisbury's government. He was opposed by Mr. Haysman, but was returned by four thousand majority. It was, therefore, as the representative of a Tory constituency that Mr. Goschen returned to Parliament, to take his seat as the Chancellor of the Exchequer of a Conservative Ministry.

Parliament met on the 27th of January, and some disappointment was felt by the Conservatives that it was not opened by the Queen in person. The Speech was a long one. It deplored the events which had compelled Prince Alexander to retire from Bulgaria, but said that Her Majesty had not thought it expedient to interfere in the election of his successor, until the proceedings arrived at the stage at which her assent was required by the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin. The task undertaken by this country in Egypt was not yet accomplished, but substantial advance had been made in ensuring tranquillity. In Upper Burmah bands of marauders had been dispersed, many of the leaders had laid down their arms, and it was confidently hoped that a general pacification of the country would be effected during the present season. Commercial treaties had been concluded with Greece and Roumania. As to Ireland, all doubt as to what the Tory policy would be was set at rest by the guarded, careful, and seemingly innocent phrases under which the promise of a Coercion Act was hidden. The condition of Ireland was said to require anxious attention. Grave crimes had been rarer; but there were organized attempts by the occupiers of land "to combine against the fulfilment of their legal obligations." Then followed the veiled intimation—"The efforts of my Government to cope with this evil have been seriously impeded by difficulties incident to the method at present prescribed by statute for dealing with such offences. Your early attention will be called to proposals for reforms in legal procedure which seem necessary to secure the prompt and efficient administration of the criminal law." The



Royal Commissioners directed to inquire into subjects of great importance to the material welfare of Ireland were at work, and the Report of the Commission on the Land Acts would soon be before Parliament. Local Government Bills were promised for England and Scotland, and were, "if possible," to be followed by one for Ireland. The other measures were : a Bill for cheapening Private Bill legislation in the three kingdoms, a Land Transfer Bill, an Allotment Bill, and one to provide for the sale of Glebe lands. The Report of the Royal Commission on Depression in Trade and Agriculture was promised ; and a Bill for altering the mode of levying Tithes in England and Wales, several Scotch Bills, a Railway Rates Bill, and a Trade Marks Bill, were foreshadowed.

The debate on the Address was preceded in the Lords by a well-deserved eulogy by Lord Salisbury and Lord Granville on the late Lord Iddesleigh. In the debate on the Address, Lord Granville said that the absence of grave crime in Ireland, to which allusion was made in the Queen's Speech, was to be attributed, not to any action of the Government, but to the widespread sympathy with the aspirations of the Irish people which had been shown by the people of England, Wales, and Scotland. Lord Salisbury taunted Lord Granville with having said nothing about the Plan of Campaign. He wanted to know "whether the inheritors of some of the proudest traditions of English statesmen did or did not falter in their denunciation of a scheme of deliberate robbery." Lord Selborne followed up this attack by an appeal, with the same object and on the same grounds, to Lord Spencer. Lord Spencer replied that as several members of Parliament were to be put on their trial for promoting the Plan of Campaign he did not think it decent to discuss the subject. He and his friends were not responsible for the action of Irish members, merely because they had on one former occasion voted with them. He denounced and condemned all illegal conspiracies now as formerly. No government

could exist which neglected the fundamental duty of protecting the lives and property of the people. Lord Salisbury had confessed that he and his colleagues were unable to maintain law and order in Ireland without exceptional powers ; but at the Woodford evictions a large force of police had stood by on four or five successive days, while breaches of the peace took place before their eyes. Was that done under the direction of the Government ? Lord Ashbourne followed up Lord Salisbury's attack on the Liberal leaders for not denouncing the Plan of Campaign, and Lord Herschell replied they had no sympathy with any form of illegality, but that when individuals were awaiting their trial, it would be out of the ordinary course—and it would never be done as regards anything in England—for those who occupied a responsible position to get up and denounce their conduct.

In the House of Commons Mr. W. H. Smith was cordially received on taking his place as Leader of the House in Lord Randolph Churchill's place. He gave notice of a resolution on Procedure. Lord Randolph Churchill then explained the reasons for his resignation. He had resigned because he could not sanction the continued increase in the Army and Navy Estimates. From 1874 to 1884 the outlay on the Army and Navy averaged £24,000,000 ; now it had bounded up to £31,000,000. He felt sure that if the Foreign policy of the country was peaceful the Estimates were excessive. From almost the commencement of the Government the Prime Minister and he had been in friendly controversy on this question, and it was well known that if the Estimates were against him he should resign. He had not done so in a hurry. In his letter telling Lord Salisbury of his final resolve, he said that the character of the domestic legislation contemplated by the Government fell sadly short of what the country expected and required ; and that the Foreign policy of the Ministry was at once dangerous and methodless. Mr. W. H. Smith expressed the regret with

which his colleagues parted from Lord Randolph, and then made kindly and appropriate reference to the death of Lord Iddesleigh. This brought up Mr. Gladstone, who spoke in terms of the highest appreciation of his life-long friend. Mr. Gladstone said he had the honour in 1843 of introducing Lord Iddesleigh to public life, of profiting largely by his personal services, and of observing that rich and abundant promise which was so well fulfilled in after years. Among other features of Lord Iddesleigh's character Mr. Gladstone remarked on his courtesy—"which was immediately connected with the foundation of his character." He seemed to be incapable of resenting an injury, and it was the fixed habit of his life to put himself entirely out of view when great public objects were before him. He would long retain an honoured place in the respect and affection of the nation.

The debate on the Address in the House of Commons extended over seventeen sittings, nearly the whole of which were devoted to Ireland. There were some interesting episodes, but the discussion, on the whole, wore out the patience of the House and of the country. On the last evening in January Mr. Sydney Buxton asked Mr. Smith whether the Government adhered to the declaration of their late Chancellor of the Exchequer against the renewal of the London Coal and Wine Duties, and Mr. Smith replied that the Government did adhere to it, though they were willing to hear what the Vestries and the London members had to say. The London members did not propose to renew the imposts, and they were quietly permitted to expire. On the 10th of February Mr. Goschen took his seat, amid loud shouts of welcome from the Ministerialists, and ironical cheers from the Liberals. Mr. T. Healy followed, to take his seat for North Longford in the room of Mr. Justin McCarthy, who had chosen to sit for Londonderry, where, on a petition, he had been declared duly elected instead of Sir Charles Lewis. Mr. J. Swift MacNeill took his seat for South Sligo and Mr. Kennedy for



South Donegal, completing the Irish Nationalist contingent of eighty-six.

The most prominent topic in the long debates on the Address was the Plan of Campaign, which Mr. Gladstone, on the first evening, described, amid loud Opposition cheers, as the consequence of the policy the Government and its friends had pursued. The Liberals had contended that some legislation for Ireland was needful, that it was an absolute duty, by provisional legislation, to save the people who were unable to pay their rents from the pains and penalties of eviction during the winter. The Government had said the rents did not require reduction and refused any concession. But now they had been putting pressure on the landlords; and the Nationalists, thinking it was no use for them to go to the landlords and enter on a course of reasoning and argument, appeared to have been exercising pressure in another way. On the second night Mr. Theodore Fry gave the House some account of what he had seen and done at the Glenbeigh evictions, and drew from the Irish Secretary a feeble apology for the landlord's conduct in burning down the houses, and an admission that he had directed General Buller and other divisional magistrates to use their influence to prevent evictions, though, in doing so, he might have exceeded a Chief Secretary's duty. On the third night Lord Randolph Churchill made one of the best speeches he had ever made in the House of Commons. Ireland, he said, seemed like a very high-spirited and mettlesome horse that had been extremely badly ridden for some time. "There is a certain school of professors of political education—chiefly represented by *The Times* newspaper—who appear to think that the way to ride a horse of that kind is to be continually jobbing him in the mouth, hitting him over the head with the whip, and continually digging him in the side with spurs. This school of professors persist passionately in the advocacy of these measures,—although they see rider after rider laid on his back in the ditch." This was a reply to the attacks of



*The Times* on Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Sir Redvers Buller, who had ventured to act on Thomas Drummond's maxim, that property has its duties as well as its rights, and in enforcing the rights of landlords to have reminded them of their duties. Of the Plan of Campaign, Lord Randolph Churchill said he did not think much. "It has prevailed on a comparatively small scale," he said, "and the instances where it has been taken up have been made the most of by the Press." The right way to maintain the Union was to identify the Government of the Union—the party of the Union—in the minds of the English people with good government, with efficient administration, with progressive legislation. As to the Liberal Unionists, when he was in the Government he made it his instant thought and desire to make things as easy as possible for them. "But I frankly admit," he added, "that I regarded the Liberal Unionists as a useful kind of crutch, and I looked forward to the time—and no distant time—when the Tory party might walk alone."

A debate on the occupation of Egypt was raised by Mr. W. Randal Cremer, who moved an amendment urging the immediate recall of the British troops. He was supported by Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Caine. Mr. Bryce objected on the ground that we could not suddenly pull up our tent poles and move out, but he thought the evacuation of Egypt should be regarded as an event in the near future. Mr. W. H. Smith said that till the day came,—and he hoped it would be soon,—when the Egyptian Government could stand alone, we must remain in Egypt. Professor Stuart suggested that instead of urging in the resolution the "immediate" recall of the troops the words "in the near future" should be substituted. Mr. Illingworth moved this amendment, but it was defeated by a majority of 120; Mr. Cremer's motion was rejected by a majority of 166.

The chief debate arose on Mr. Parnell's Amendment declaring that the relation between landlords and tenants had not been seriously disturbed where "such abatements

of rent as were called for by the state of prices of agricultural and pastoral produce" had been made, and that the remedy for the existing crisis in Irish affairs was "not to be found in increased stringency of criminal procedure or in pursuit of such novel, doubtful and unconstitutional measures as have recently been taken," but in "such a reform of the law and system of government as will satisfy the needs and secure the confidence of the Irish people." The debate on this amendment practically raised the Home Rule question over again. The new points in it arose out of the conduct of the Government in Ireland and the Plan of Campaign. Mr. Parnell was not responsible for the Plan, but he pointed out that it was the direct result of the rejection of the Tenants' Relief Bill in the previous autumn. Mr. John Dillon praised the Government for repressing evictions, said that there were Irish landlords who were determined to have their pound of flesh, and it was for those landlords the Plan of Campaign was brought into action; and it had practically stopped evictions. Mr. John Morley, in opening the debate on the second night, said that where there was a real grievance without legal remedy, the population—some portion of it, at least—would resort to illegitimate means of redress. That, he said, was the history of Ireland in a nutshell. Mr. Shaw Lefevre, speaking in the same debate, mentioned the Plan of Campaign as put into operation by Lord Dillon's tenants. They combined and brought Lord Dillon to terms, "an abatement of twenty per cent. was made over the whole estate, the decrees which had been issued against about seventy of the tenants were withdrawn, and peace now reigns on the property." Lord Hartington was greatly scandalized by Mr. Lefevre's defence of the Plan, and was quite disposed to think a Coercion Act might be necessary to put it down. Mr. Storey in a brilliant speech declared that the evils of Ireland were such that if the Government did not act somebody must. Irishmen could not allow their friends to die or to be burnt out of their hovels. "If I were an Irishman it

would go hard with me, but, like the honourable member for Mayo, I would strain a point under the circumstances."

Sir William Harcourt wound up the debate on the Liberal side. After exposing the vacillations of the Chief Secretary, he said that one consequence of refusing the Irish demand for self-government was discontent, out of which there had always arisen illegitimate combination and unlawful action. "We pride ourselves on being a law-abiding people, but even we, when the Government did not suit us, have, from the time of Charles the First to the present day, done many irregular things which the lawyers would find to be extremely illegal." As to the Plan of Campaign; in the early origin of the Liberal party, there was an illegal Plan of Campaign by a man of the name of John Hampden who refused to pay ship-money. On another occasion, respectable Nonconformists disguised themselves as Indians, boarded a vessel in the Bay of Boston, took out cases of tea and threw them into the sea. That was a perfectly unlawful transaction. It is thoroughly to be condemned, and I condemn it." After referring to the Canadian precedent, and speaking of the jury-packing in Dublin, Sir W. Harcourt recurred to the Plan of Campaign. Subject to what he had said as to the people being discontented with their Government, he condemned the Plan, as he condemned Hampden's resistance to ship-money, and the throwing of other people's tea into the sea. In conclusion he said, "You are going to tread the old path. We know it well. You have got the majority and you have power to take that road. It is a road which is strewn with the carcasses of many defeated Administrations. My belief is that your bones will strew it also. But, for us, our course is clear. To a policy of coercion, whether we are in a majority or a minority, we will oppose a policy of conciliation and self-government; and when you have failed, as fail you will, it will be the privilege of the Liberal party, in accordance with its great traditions, to give to distracted Ireland the blessings of contentment and of peace." The

motion was defeated by 352 to 246, a majority for the Government of 106.

This division gave the greatest encouragement to the Government. It showed them at once that they could reckon on the support of the Dissident Liberals, sixty-eight of whom voted against the Liberal party, Mr. Bright, Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Hartington, Sir Henry James, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Caine, Mr. G. Dixon, Mr. Heneage, Mr. Craig Sellar, Mr. W. Kenrick, and Mr. Powell-Williams being among them. During the discussion preparations were going on for an election at Burnley, to fill the place of Mr. Peter Rylands, who had died suddenly on the 4th of February. He had fought a close fight at the General Election, which his biographer says hastened his death. Mr. Peter Rylands had been one of the active opponents of the Home Rule Bill. His son, in writing his father's life, regards this opposition as an apparent inconsistency in a Radical who could with difficulty be persuaded to support Coercion under Mr. Gladstone's Government. "In the year 1885," he says, "Mr. Rylands was actuated by two powerful feelings ; a feeling of distrust and dislike of Mr. Gladstone, which had grown, little by little, since 1880, till it amounted almost to a monomania ; and a feeling of disgust at the Irish party." The biographer further says that the Burnley Liberals "did not know that failing health and increasing age had made him more of a Conservative than a Radical in his sympathies ; and they did not know that owing to the decay of mental vigour, he had allowed two powerful prejudices so to obscure his judgment, as to prevent him from forming an impartial opinion on any matter on which they were able to operate." This is probably a true account of others besides Mr. Rylands. The election to fill Mr. Rylands's seat marked another step in the Coalition of the Dissident Liberals with the Tories, for Lord Hartington wrote a letter in favour of Mr. Thursby, the Tory candidate. Mr. Rylands had been returned for



Burnley in 1886 by Tory votes, with a majority of 43 over the Liberal candidate, Mr. Greenwood. Mr. Slagg, who sat as a Liberal member for Manchester from 1880 to 1885, and had lost his seat in the latter year, was now the Liberal candidate, and was returned by a majority of 545, on a poll some twelve hundred larger than that in the previous year.

When Mr. Slagg took his seat, the long debate on the Address was over. It had been brought to an end by the independent action of the Speaker. Two attempts had been made, one by Mr. Dillwyn, the other by Mr. Dillon, to raise a protest against the packing of the jury in the pending trial of Mr. Dillon and his friends. Mr. Sexton had a motion on the same subject on the notice paper, and the Speaker would not allow it to be discussed on any other motion. As soon as the Address was out of the way, Mr. W. H. Smith, on the 21st of February, brought forward his new Procedure Rules. Lord Salisbury had held a meeting of the Conservative party at the Foreign Office earlier in the day, to talk over the state of business, and the prospects of the Session. It was attended by 214 members of the House of Commons and seventy peers. He was congratulatory and apologetic: congratulatory on Mr. Goschen's accession and Mr. W. H. Smith's success, and apologetic as to the Procedure proposals and the Irish policy of the Government. They had taken up the question of Procedure under the pressure of sheer necessity, and he strongly urged that the party should support their proposal. As to Ireland, they had done all they could with their existing powers, and they would ask for more as soon as the Procedure resolutions were out of the way. There was some discussion on Ireland and on the Closure, and with respect to the latter Mr. W. H. Smith remarked that the great safeguard in their plan was that the motion for Closure could not be made by a member of the House without the previous sanction of the Speaker. With this infallible safeguard the meeting was content. Mr. Smith

then went down to the House and proposed the first of the new rules. This was the Closure against which the Conservative party had fought devotedly before, and which Mr. Chaplin had consistently and persistently denounced. The rule allowed the Closure to be moved if the previous consent of the Chair had been obtained. Under the old rule the Speaker or Chairman of Committees must suggest the Closure, under the new proposal the responsibility still rested on the Chair, but any member could ask permission to apply the Closure. Mr. Gladstone promised that the Procedure proposals should be treated in a spirit precisely the opposite to that in which those of his own Administration had been met. Nineteen days had been spent before they could obtain a Closure resolution, which was now found to be too weak by those who then opposed it. He objected to the proposal to ask the Speaker's consent, but rejoiced that the apprehensions the Tory party had professed with respect to the Closure had entirely disappeared from their minds. After several nights of debate, and the rejection of several amendments, a compromise was come to, by which Mr. Smith's safeguard was modified, and the Closure could be moved by any member, though it remained with the Chair to decide whether to put it or not. It was only to be carried when more than two hundred members voted for it, or less than forty opposed it while a hundred supported it. It was passed and made a Standing Order on the 18th of March.

Meanwhile a good deal had happened in the House of Commons. On the first of March, Mr. George Howell moved the adjournment, in order to call attention to the corrupt expenditure of public money by the City Corporation, for the purpose of preventing the passing of a measure for the better government of London. Mr. Howell had a striking story to tell. He had been going through the accounts of the Special Committee of the Corporation, appointed to organize opposition to Sir William Harcourt's Bill for establishing a Municipality of

London. The receipts showed that a meeting had been held at Battersea, to express the opinion of the working classes on the Bill. The Committee men, who got it up, were paid twelve pounds ; stewards, thirty shillings ; hire of organizers and speakers, sixteen pounds, and "hire of attendants to compose the meeting, fifteen pounds." There were charges for petty cash, and for reporters to attend, and to send reports, authenticated by known names, to the papers. The resolutions passed at this meeting were advertised in all the newspapers, and sent to every member of Parliament. Similar sham meetings were held at Brixton, at Islington, at a Hibernian Club at Lisson Grove, and even at Princes' Hall, Piccadilly. At this last gathering Lord George Hamilton attended and spoke, and a hundred and thirty-two persons were paid "to help to make the audience." Meetings on the other side were broken up. At a meeting held at the Bridge House Hotel to support the London Government Bill, the platform was stormed, and the men who did it were paid twenty-six pounds. At a meeting at Kensington Town Hall, hostile speakers, movers of resolutions, and people to vote for them, were provided, at a cost of eighty-two pounds. The Government hesitated, but on the third of March Mr. W. H. Smith granted the Select Committee for which Mr. Howell had asked. The Committee thus appointed proved to be an effective means of getting a troublesome question out of the way. In less than three weeks it issued a Report which apologized for the Corporation, while admitting that the details of expenditure given by Mr. Howell in his speech were correct. The facts were admitted, the necessary inferences from them were disputed. The Committee thought the expenditure on advertisements was extravagant, but it was not proved to be corrupt. No proper supervision was maintained over the agents employed by the Corporation, and much of the money that passed through their hands was used for indefensible purposes. "The practice of placing Corporate

Funds at the disposal of irresponsible and unknown persons, was calculated," said the Report, "to mislead Parliament by the appearance of an active and organized public opinion, which might have no existence." This was really a verdict of guilty; but all attempts to get anything further done were vain.

While the Procedure debates were going on, attention was recalled to the question of the Irish tenants, by the issue of the Report of the Royal Commission which had been appointed to inquire into their circumstances. The Commissioners, over whom Lord Cowper presided, were Lord Milltown, Sir James Caird, Mr. J. C. Nelligan, and Mr. Thomas Knipe. They held sixty sittings and examined 305 witnesses, including Judge Flanagan, the Registrar-General for Ireland, 72 landowners and agents, and 170 tenant farmers. Their Report was published on the 24th of February, in excellent time for the prompt carrying out of the legislation it recommended. The facts the Report set forth were conclusive. The Commissioners showed that from August 1881 to August 1886, 176,800 fair rents had been fixed, and a total rental of £3,227,021 had been reduced to £2,638,549, a reduction of eighteen and one-fifth per cent. "The sudden fall in prices during the past two years," said the Report, "was intensified in its effect by a gradual deterioration which had been going on in the quality and produce of the soil, both tillage and grass, during a series of years of low temperature and much rain, especially in 1879, the worst year of the century. During this period much of the tenants' capital in Ireland, as in other parts of the United Kingdom, had disappeared. The cost of cultivation, compared with that of an earlier period, had also greatly increased, the land has, in consequence, been much drawn upon and reduced in condition by the increasing exigencies of the tenants, and has thereby brought poorer crops and consequent scarcity of money to meet engagements, both to landlords and to other creditors. The withdrawal of credit to the farmers, by the banks and



other lenders of money, which began after 1879 (although to some extent to be attributed to the difficulty of collecting debts, owing to the organization of the National League), is strong evidence of the diminishing means of the Irish farmers given by persons most closely acquainted with their circumstances. All classes are thus suffering from the defective produce of the soil over a period of years, a state of things much aggravated by the sudden fall of prices in the last two." Such was the statement of the Royal Commissioners. It was only another and fuller way of repeating what Sir James Caird had said eleven months before, that from the 538,000 holdings of the tenant farmers of Ireland "economic rent has for the present disappeared." In order to test the value of statements made to them, the Commissioners requested the Registrar-General to make a Return of the value and quantity of live stock and crops, the produce, and the average prices of each year from 1881 to 1886. "This carefully prepared statement," said the Report, "shows an average fall in the last two years, as compared with the average of the four preceding years, in the value of the agricultural capital of the occupiers of land in Ireland, amounting to eighteen and a half per cent., a loss which goes far to explain the present depressed condition of Irish agricultural property."

The Commission brought out some very remarkable statements. They examined Sir Redvers Buller, who said in reply to a question "I see some very hard cases, hard cases of men being pressed for rents they cannot pay. I wrote to a landlord the other day who was about to turn out a man. That man paid a year's rent and he owed three; he was evicted, and that man I verily believe really meant to pay the amount. I satisfied myself that, if he got time, he was going to pay his rent when his children, who were in service in Limerick, sent their wages to him." In reply to a further question he said: "I think there should be a discretion in giving decrees, and that there should be some means of modifying and redressing the

grievances of rents being still higher than the people can pay. You have got a very ignorant, poor people, and the law should look after them, instead of which it has only looked after the rich; that appears to me to be the case on coming here." "I feel very strongly that in this part of the country you can never have peace, unless you create some legal equipoise, or legal equivalent, that will supply the want of freedom of contract that now exists between the landlord and the tenant. I think there should be some legal machinery which should give the tenant an equivalent for the pressure that the landlord is able to put on him, owing to his love of the land." Such was the opinion to which his experience and observation had brought the gallant soldier whom the Government had sent on a special errand to deal with the disorders in Kerry. Nor was this all. General Sir Redvers Buller being asked "Is there any general sympathy with the action of the League on the part of the people?" made this striking reply: "Yes, I think so; they pay to it. I think there is sympathy, because they think it has been their salvation." "It has been their salvation!" exclaimed the Commissioner. "Yes," replied Sir Redvers Buller; "the bulk of the tenants in this west part of Ireland tell me of rents that have been reduced and of evictions that have been stayed, which are directly due to the operations of the League. They believe, whatever truth there may be in it, that nobody did anything for the tenants until the League was established, and when the landlords could not let their farms then they were forced to consider the question of rent. There are in this district of Killarney 1,680 acres of derelict farms from which the tenants having been evicted have been allowed to remain in as caretakers." "They have been kept derelict," interposed the Commissioner; "do you think that desirable?" "No," said Sir Redvers Buller, "most undesirable. It is an enormous loss to the country, but because it does not pay to turn a tenant out, he is not turned out." The questioner said,

"The result is that it is no longer possible to enforce legal obligations?" Sir Redvers Buller answered "Yes." "Well, that hardly looks as if the law was all for the rich?" said the Commissioner. "The law!" replied Sir Redvers Buller, "there is not much law in this part of the country, but a short time ago what law there was, was really on the side of the rich."

The recommendations of the Commissioners were not wholly in harmony with this remarkable evidence. The remedies they suggested seem to have been arrived at as a sort of compromise between what the actual condition of things demanded, and what political and social conditions rendered possible. Their proposals were, first, the revision of judicial rents every five years, instead of every fifteen years, and especially the application of this provision to rents fixed before 1886; and secondly, the fixing of a rent in strict relation to the price of produce, making the judicial rent "a produce rent." They further advised that certain classes of leaseholds and Town Park holdings should be admitted to the benefit of the Acts; that some congested districts should be relieved by migration and emigration, and that some modifications should be made in the Land Purchase Acts. They thought, too, that family charges on estates now reduced in value should be readjusted, and that Crown rents and tithe rent charges should be redeemable or apportionable. They recommended that no landlord should be entitled to recover any arrears of rent, for more than two years next before bringing the action. They concluded by urging, in the interests of all classes, the maintenance of law and order, which had been grievously outraged in several parts of the country.

This Report, and still more the evidence taken by the Commissioners, fully justified the mild policy of Sir M. Hicks-Beach and the Irish officials. It showed how the poverty and distress of these poor tenants, striving to pay their rents out of the earnings of their daughters in domestic service, or trying to defend themselves by illegal means



against a law that oppressed them, pleaded for them to humane men who came into actual contact with them. But other influences pulled the Government in the other direction. *The Times* had made itself the organ of the Irish landlords who objected to make any concessions to their tenants, and all through the winter it had complained of the Under Secretary, Sir Redvers Buller, and of the Chief Secretary, Sir M. Hicks-Beach, for not showing enough alacrity in pushing evictions. When the men who had been convicted at Sligo for rioting at the Woodford evictions (described in Chapter VIII.) were brought up for sentence on the fifth of January, Chief Baron Palles made a special deliverance on the duties of the Executive. He complained that on four days, while the sheriff was attempting to execute the eviction decrees of the Courts, or "writs of possession," as they are euphemistically called, the police stood by for an hour "amid breaches of the peace, gross and open violations of the law, and open defiance of the authority of the Queen, and of her mandate to the sheriff." He reminded the officers of the law that such a course was illegal, and could not be taken without risk of heavy liability by any official person, whether Inspector General, Under Secretary, or Chief Secretary. This is the high and dry doctrine of a man who is a lawyer and nothing more. The law is not to have an eye for misery, an ear for cries of distress, a heart for human pity, or a soul to sympathize with suffering and sorrow and the sense of wrong. It must be passionless and pitiless, and those who administer it must be like it. The Irish administration under Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had not risen to this superhuman height. Sir Redvers Buller could not leave his humane feelings behind him, but took them with him when he went to Kerry and Clare, where evicting landlords found them most inconvenient and embarrassing, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach could not forget his English prejudice for doing justice and loving mercy when he became the Chief Secretary for Ireland.



When these two officials gave evidence in the trial of Mr. Dillon and others, they admitted that efforts had been made to persuade landlords not to go to extremities. *The Times* remonstrated with them, and spoke of the pressure they had put on the landlords, as efforts to contend with the party of disorder on their own ground. On the 11th of January *The Times* wrote, "Unfortunately it is too clear from the evidence of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Sir Redvers Buller and Captain Plunkett in the Dublin Police Court, as well as from the charge of Chief Baron Palles at Sligo, that the vigorous enforcement of the law against tenants combining to refuse the payment of rent is discouraged by the Irish Executive." The article concluded with these words: "The Government cannot surely desire that landlords should combine to provide armed force on their own behalf, yet if the Executive draw back, what choice is there between this dangerous approach to civil war, and the complete victory of the League?" On the next day *The Times* wrote: "The Government does not appear to have any adequate conception of the extent to which it is itself upon its trial just now. To vindicate the law in Ireland is its *raison d'être*, and its mission as proclaimed by its most prominent members. Strong and steady administration is Lord Salisbury's own remedy for Irish ills. The dispensing power, which, in spite of disclaimers, has been and is being freely used, as the orators of the League are fully aware, strikes at the root of all confidence in the law and in his Government." Again on January 14th *The Times* said, "One disastrous result of the attempt to exercise indirectly a sort of dispensing power is seen in the defiant attitude of the peasantry. The dupes of the League have been led to believe that if they show a bold front, the authorities will not give effectual assistance to the Sheriff in enforcing the processes of the Queen's Courts. The result is such scenes as those at the Glenbeigh evictions." These are the scenes described in a previous chapter, where the houses of the tenants were burned, and all mankind

were horrified, except these Shylocks of the press. In another article (January 17th), *The Times* spoke of these evictions as "a battle-piece which the National League have arranged," and of the evicted tenants as "victims, not of rapacious landlordism, but of the professional politicians employed by the enemies of England in the United States to organize disturbances and to bring Government into contempt." These attacks were continued till Parliament met, and the party whose opinion they embodied was gratified by the promise of a Coercion Bill. When February passed away and that promise was not redeemed, the attacks were resumed, and when early in March Sir M. Hicks-Beach resigned it was felt that though the cataract from which he was suffering was the immediate occasion of his retirement, that retirement was seized as an opportunity for making a change of policy in Irish affairs.

The tactics of the advocates of Coercion were illustrated by a story that was brought before Parliament. On the seventh of March the day on which the first number of "Parnellism and Crime" was published in *The Times*, the Irish Correspondent of that paper reported a hideous case of moonlighting outrage at Killarney. A party of ruffians, he said, visited the house of a farmer and found him at home with his only daughter. The girl clung to her father, and one miscreant tried to drag her away. The old man resisted, but another miscreant held a revolver to his head and threatened to fire if he moved. The girl was then carried off to be made the victim of the worst of outrages. This statement was at once put by Mr. T. W. Russell into the form of a question to the Chief Secretary, and thus for two or three days it was printed in the Parliamentary notices, sent out to members of the House of Commons, and kept prominently before the public. On the 11th of March *The Times* said the statement had been officially contradicted, and Mr. T. W. Russell quietly withdrew the question. Efforts were made to prevent Mr. E. Harrington from putting the contradiction before the House of

Commons, but the Speaker allowed it, and after three or four days of currency the falsehood was stopped. On the third of March Mr. Healy called attention to the wild language in which the Earl of Rossmore, a young peer of three-and-twenty, a sub-Lieutenant in the Guards, had spoken of Mr. Gladstone at an Orange meeting, suggesting that he should be regarded and treated as a mad dog. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach treated the speech with the contempt it deserved. Less vicious words used by Fenian orators were however paraded as serious utterances, and made the basis of the most frightful charges against the Irish members in "Parnellism and Crime." On the Supplementary Estimate of £30,960 for the Irish Constabulary, Mr. Dillon pointed out that a total of £93,460 had been asked that year for allowances and travelling expenses for the Irish police. In evicting four poor families on Lord Clanricarde's estate the sum spent on car hire alone was £1,372, and the whole sum the tenants owed was £25. There was also £450 for assistance given in the turning out of the tenants at Glenbeigh. A long and acrimonious discussion followed, the Chief Secretary contending that the law must be enforced at any cost. The vote was carried by 246 to 121. It was already obvious that the Government were falling away from the merciful policy of the winter to one of coercion and repression.

On the second of March Sir George Trevelyan, speaking at the Devonshire Club, said that the policy of the Government should have been to have enforced the law against law-breakers, and then to have placed on the table of the House of Commons, the first thing in the Session, "a scheme for the Government of Ireland, so large, so thorough and comprehensive, that they might have been justified in representing it as a final settlement." But they did neither the one nor the other. At the outset of the renewal of the disturbances they allowed the violence of the mob to overcome the officers of the law, and "from that time the game of law and order was up in Ireland." They had let the



golden opportunity slip from their grasp. On Saturday the seventh of March Lord Salisbury was present at the opening dinner of the National Conservative Club at Willis's Rooms. There had been great discontent in the Tory ranks—a discontent which had found expression at the party gathering at the Foreign Office on the 21st of February—at the delay in producing the Coercion Act. At Willis's Rooms he was able to announce that the Hour had come and with it the Man. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had said on Thursday that he was suffering greatly, as indeed everybody perceived, and he was not in his place in the House of Commons on Friday night. On Saturday morning it was announced that he was laid up with a severe attack of influenza, and in the afternoon it was stated that he had resigned, and that Mr. Balfour would take his place. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was suffering from cataract, and an operation and a prolonged period of rest had become needful to him. Lord Salisbury spoke of him as "one of the ablest, the most loyal, the wisest, the most resolute of colleagues, who united in himself in a singular degree the various qualities needed for solving this terrible problem that has beset statesmen through many a generation." The problem was Ireland. "For us," said Lord Salisbury, "the politics of the moment are summarized in the name of 'Ireland.'" "The Irish question," he said, "as we look at it now, seems to us like an evil dream. It is one of those nightmares where a danger or a horror presses upon you, which you feel that you ought to be able to dissipate, but something fetters your limbs and paralyzes your energies, and you are unable to make the necessary movement by which the danger or the horror can be dissipated." This very familiar figure of speech was used by way of apology for the delay in resorting to Coercion. Now, however, the delay was over, and "a stern duty," he said, "will be imposed on the men, whoever they are, who have to rule in the times that are before us, and from that duty they will not escape under pain of betraying the most



sacred trust that can be reposed in them." All this really meant, that the Government had discovered that to whatever lengths they might go in leading Ireland back to the evil system of repression and of "government that did not flinch," they would have the support of at least enough of the Dissident Liberals to sustain them in it.

It was probably nothing more than a coincidence, but a very strange and significant coincidence, that the first article of the series entitled "Parnellism and Crime," appeared in *The Times* on the day on which the morning papers announced Mr. Balfour's appointment. The object of these papers was to smooth the passage of a Coercion Bill, and to ruin the Home Rule cause by accusing the Irish members of connivance at crime, and branding English Home Rulers as abettors and associates of criminals. The bearing of these papers on current opinion will be pointed out in the succeeding chapter, and I need only briefly refer to them here. The excuse with which the anti-Coercion Dissidents were to cover their apostasy was derived from the parade of agrarian crime. Speaking at Birmingham on the twelfth of March, Mr. Chamberlain said, with respect to the coming Coercion Bill, that he understood the Government would probably ask Parliament for a renewal of those clauses in the Crimes Act, which, in 1885, Mr. Gladstone declared to be necessary and salutary. Those clauses were devised, and were used, to put down crimes of outrage and intimidation. "I have no sympathy," said Mr. Chamberlain, amid loud applause, as though there was something striking in the declaration, "I have no sympathy with outrage and intimidation. I have no sympathy with scoundrels who shoot old men in the legs, who cut off the hair of young girls, and pour pitch upon their heads, because they speak to a policeman, who hoot and jeer at the widow of a man they have assassinated, and have no mercy on her sufferings, and no respect for her sorrow; who even refuse to provide, or

allow to be provided, a coffin to contain the murdered remains. I say, with these men, at all events, I have no sympathy, and I am perfectly prepared to do anything which will secure to the law the power of punishing them for such infamous offences." Neither Mr. Chamberlain, nor his audience, had inquired whether these charges against some Irish peasants were true; and, in fact, the horrible crime of cutting off a girl's hair, and pouring pitch upon her head, is one, as Mr. Gladstone showed, copied from Irish history, and was perpetrated by the rulers of Ireland. Nor did Mr. Chamberlain and his friends stop to ask whether it was for such horrors as he enumerated that a new Crimes Bill was needed. If it had been, nobody would have objected to it. The Queen's Speech however had declared that grave crimes had "happily been rarer during the last few months, than during a similar period in the preceding year," and it was precisely that "similar period in the preceding year," in which the Tory Government had found reason for dropping the Crimes Act. But the disturbance now spoken of in the Queen's Speech, was that of organized attempts "to incite the tenants to combine against the fulfilment of their legal obligations." "The efforts of my Government to compete with the evil," said the Speech; "have been seriously impeded by difficulties incident to the method at present prescribed by statute, in dealing with such offences," and it was for this purpose only, that "reform of legal procedure," was declared necessary in the Speech. This talk of revolting outrages then, had no other relation to the Coercion Bill, than that of a false and irrelevant excuse for giving it support. Under pretence of securing to the law the power to punish such infamous offences, Mr. Chamberlain and his friends put into Mr. Balfour's hands a weapon of political proscription, which was afterwards used, with their tacit consent, not to punish outrage for which the law was strong enough already, but to throw an English country gentleman, like Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, into an Irish prison for the revolting

crime of holding a meeting, and making a speech which the Irish police had forbidden.

Mr. Balfour lost no time in showing that his administration meant, "government which did not flinch." He went to Dublin on the seventh of March, was sworn in on the eighth, and on Wednesday, the ninth, instructed Captain Plunkett to telegraph to the District Inspector at Youghal, "Deal very summarily, if any organized resistance to lawful authority. If necessary, do not hesitate to shoot." On the next Monday he was in his place in the House of Commons, and was warmly welcomed by his Tory friends. On Tuesday, the 15th, he was asked as to this telegram, whether he had seen Captain Plunkett on Thursday, and whether it was with his knowledge that such instructions were sent. He gaily replied, that he rather thought it was Wednesday when he saw Captain Plunkett, and that he certainly approved the telegram. The disturbances at Youghal, in respect of which this order, not to hesitate to shoot, was given, arose out of an attempt to serve a summons on Father Keller, a Roman Catholic priest. Father Keller's evidence was wanted in a bankruptcy case, which had arisen out of the application of the Plan of Campaign on the Ponsonby estate. The priest and his people thought that he had been summoned in order that his knowledge of the affairs of his parishioners might be made use of against them. The women, therefore, mobbed the bailiff, and when a messenger of the Bankruptcy Court was expected to arrest the priest, three-fourths of the people sat up all night to watch. Next day, a number of police arrived, and the crowd pelted them. They charged with bayonets, and the people fled. One of the flying crowd, named O'Hanlon, was pierced in the back by a policeman's bayonet and killed. Father Keller was arrested and taken to Dublin, where great excitement was caused by his appearance. He refused to answer questions which he said involved secrets disclosed to him in the confidence of the Confessional. He was sent to prison,

and was accompanied along the two miles from the Four Courts to Kilmainham by cheering crowds, who sang "God Save Ireland," and "We'll hang Judge Boyd on a sour apple-tree." Mr. Dillon brought the subject of the arrest before the House of Commons, and charged the Government with provoking the agitation with the object of providing reasons for Coercion. This was the first step in the new policy of "Thorough," which Mr. Balfour had come into office to enforce. There were to be no more attempts to temper the administration of the law with kindness to the tenants. The only way to wring the landlord's revenue from half a million of men, from whose petty holdings economic rent had disappeared, was to fall back upon Coercion.



## CHAPTER XI.

*REACTION IN FULL CAREER.*

MR. BALFOUR had only occupied the position of Chief Secretary for a fortnight when, on the 21st of March, he gave notice in the House of Commons that he would move for leave to bring in a Bill "to make better provision for the detection and punishment of crime in Ireland and for other purposes." Immediately on this notice being given Mr. W. H. Smith announced that, on the next day, he would move that the introduction and several stages of the Bill should have precedence, whenever they were set down by the Government as the first business of the day. Mr. John Morley followed with a notice of amendment "That this House declines to set aside the business of the nation, in favour of a measure for increasing the stringency of the criminal law in Ireland, while no effectual security has been taken against the abuse of the law by the exaction of excessive rent." Mr. T. W. Russell then asked as to the probable date of the introduction of the Land Bill, and Mr. Smith said the Chief Secretary would make a statement on the subject almost immediately. Mr. Russell's question was shrewdly interposed as showing that the Dissident Liberals, whom he represented, were anxious to associate conciliation with coercion. Mr. Balfour's notice was received with enthusiasm on the Conservative side. It had been prepared for by a Campaign of Calumny, in which the greatest possible efforts had been made to associate the Irish Nationalist movement and the Irish Nationalist members with agrarian crimes. *The Times*, in welcoming

the announcement, said that the measure, "however stringent its provisions may be, can be only a terror to evil-doers ; it will not restrain the liberty of any law-abiding man ; the acts it is intended to bring under control are such as the moral sense of all civilized human beings are agreed in condemning." In the same article *The Times* said "The Gladstonians have had full and fair warning of the grave charges against their present confederates that are to be found, not in hostile newspapers, but in the pages of *The Irish World*, and of the still more serious presumptions that arise out of those unchallenged and unchallengeable statements. If, by-and-by, presumption should pass into proof, the members of the Opposition, who are now going to join with Mr. Morley in resisting the restoration of the authority of law in Ireland, cannot fall back upon the feeble pleas of inadvertence and ignorance."

This article forcibly illustrates the spirit in which the Tory party entered on the old round of Coercion. The Coercion Bill was to be forced through by calumny. The first series of articles entitled "Parnellism and Crime" appeared in *The Times* between the seventh and the fourteenth of March. The first article was entitled "A Retrospect: Ireland," and consisted of a number of quotations of wild speeches made at meetings at which some members of the Irish party were present, woven in with statements for which no evidence was offered, but which, at least, associated the Irish members with crime by putting their names in juxtaposition with it. The second article was called "A Retrospect: America," and was constructed on the same basis. The third was entitled "A Study in Contemporary Conspiracy." It contended that these "studies of Parnellism," which did "not affect to be complete," had "revealed nearly all the chief members of the first Home Rule Ministry, Mr. Parnell himself, Mr. Justin McCarthy, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Healy, Mr. Biggar, the Messrs. Redmond, William O'Brien and Davitt, in trade and traffic with

avowed dynamiters and known contrivers of murder." As these shells of moral dynamite exploded in the hands of the persons who invented them, it is needless to give further analysis of their contents. But for a time they did their work. They were backed up by letters and leading articles skilfully addressed to the prejudices of those who were willing to think badly of Irishmen. In the argument for the Coercion Bill, both in the House of Commons and on the platform, the utmost use was made of these charges, and the greatest confidence was placed in the truthfulness of those who made them. The issue of "Parnellism and Crime" was, however, but the first step in the Campaign of Calumny by which the Coercion Bill was to be imposed upon those of the Dissident Liberals who were hostile to its principle, and upon a country which had been assured that conciliation and not coercion was the policy of the Ministry it had placed in power.

Mr. Smith's motion to give the Coercion Bill precedence was debated in the House of Commons for four nights. The discussion went over the well-trodden ground of the Irish controversy, but there was a new feature now. The Report of the Cowper Commission, and the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller, showed that what was really urgent was a measure of Tenants' Relief. In moving his amendment on the first night of the debate Mr. John Morley made effective use of this and of other evidence which was taken by the Commission. "You are not aiming at putting down rebellion," said Mr. Morley, "you are not aiming at quenching sedition. You are acting against a combination to protect the tenants against rents which you yourselves will admit—will be compelled to admit—to be excessive and exorbitant, and against which these combinations are the only existing safeguard." Referring to the Report of the Royal Commission and the evidence of the witnesses it examined, Mr. Morley said "We have now before us not only the charges of the Judges describing the state of the country, but we have the Blue-Book, with

regard to which I do not scruple to say, it is one of the most important social documents issued since the Devon Commission in 1844." He then pointed out that each of the pleas urged by the Liberal party in the autumn discussion on Mr. Parnell's Tenants' Relief Bill had been proved by the Commissioners. The serious fall in prices, the deterioration of the soil, the rise in the cost of cultivating the land, all were reported by the Commissioners to have taken place. Mr. Morley then quoted the evidence of Mr. Hussey, the land agent, who said that of a quarter of a million of rent which he collected, only one-fifth reached the hands of the landlords. This pressure on them compelled them to press on the tenants, and hence the trouble. "This Bill, sir," said Mr. Morley, "is a Bill for enabling landlords to exact exorbitant rents." Among the witnesses examined by the Royal Commissioners was Captain Hamilton, chief director of the Landlords' Defence Association. He complained that "at nearly every eviction the divisional magistrate and resident magistrate, and very often the district inspector, all bear down upon the landlord's representative and, as it were, put themselves on the side of the tenant as against the landlord." This sympathy of the officials with the poor was, according to Captain Hamilton, the cause of all the trouble at evictions, and his opinion was that "in dealing with the tenants there should be no door of hope." "This, sir," said Mr. Morley, "is a Bill for placing the Government on the side of the landlords, and in Captain Hamilton's own words for shutting the door of hope." Mr. Balfour's reply was in the nature of a *tu quoque*. He did not touch the evidence taken by the Royal Commission, nor deal with its Report, but asked "Am I to understand that the Act of 1881 is, in the opinion of its authors, not only a total failure, on account of the length of the period fixed, but also because the tenants who have a right to go into the Court cannot or will not do so?" As to the fall in prices, it had begun in 1885, why did not Mr. Morley and his friends deal with it then?



"In 1881 you solemnly passed an Act establishing contracts with regard to rent for fifteen years, and before that Act has been six years in operation you say those contracts must be broken." The Government did mean, however, to bring in a Bill giving tenants some equitable relief, akin to that given by Mr. Chamberlain's Bankruptcy Act. This Bill would not solve the Irish Land question, which could only be done by a large measure of land purchase. But remedial measures, he said, must be preceded and prepared for by the restoration of order. On the third night the discussion was opened by Mr. Gladstone. Comparing the present Coercion Bill with that of 1881, he pointed out that in 1881 crime had doubled, but now it had decreased, in 1881 too a majority of the Irish members were in favour of Coercion, now five-sixths of the Irish members and three-sevenths of the whole House of Commons were against it. He severely condemned the dismissal of Sir Robert Hamilton, whose only offence was that of Lord Carnarvon whose services the Government had been anxious to retain. Calling attention to the evidence the Government had got through their own Commissioners, whose Report was on the table, he showed, from General Buller's statements, not only that six-sevenths of the country were free from crime, but that there was no unwillingness to pay rent. He and his friends, he said, would resist this ill-omened measure "to the last stage of it, when the voice of numbers shall with full Parliamentary authority drown what we think to be the voice of reason and of justice; when another false step after the warnings which eighty-six years have given, and given in vain, shall be taken, and a further blow shall be struck, under the name of a Parliamentary statute, alike at the happiness and the prosperity and the contentment of Ireland, and at the union of the Empire." Mr. Chamberlain spoke in support of the Bill, declaring, however, that he would give no vote for a government which did not acknowledge the further duty of solving the great agrarian problem. On the last

night the discussion was continued by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Sir Henry James, Sir William Harcourt, and Mr. Goschen, and Mr. Morley's amendment was rejected and urgency voted by 349 to 260, a majority of 89.

In this critical debate and division the coalition between the Tories and the Dissentient Liberals was further strengthened. In thus voting urgency for a new Coercion Bill the Dissentient Liberals filled up the measure of their apostasy. Sixty-seven voted with the Government, and three, Mr. C. R. Talbot, Mr. Winterbotham and Sir Hussey Vivian voted with the Liberals, whom they now practically rejoined. Mr. Jesse Collings had written beforehand to *The Daily News* to explain that he was one of seven English members who had voted against the Coercion Bill of 1881, and could not vote for Coercion now. Mr. Collings, however, was still one of seven, but of seven Dissentient Liberals who instead of voting against Coercion contented themselves with staying away and not voting for it. But he was still for Home Rule. "The issue to be made clear," he said, "is between Unionist Home Rule and Separatist Home Rule." The division gave great satisfaction to the Government and their friends. There were signs of unrest among some of their Liberal supporters, and at the "inaugural" dinner of the Liberal Union Club on the 30th of March, Lord Hartington said many of them had hoped that a Coercion Act would never again be necessary for Ireland, and that it was a great disappointment and a sore trial to be again asked to vote for one. "I know," he added, "that a severe trial is about to be put on many warm adherents of the Unionist cause. I will not attempt to put any compulsion on their votes or consciences, but there are certain propositions which none of us can take exception to." These were, that Ireland must be governed by a responsible government, that those who had resisted Home Rule were now bound to enable a British Government to govern Ireland, and that even Liberal Ministries had brought in measures of repression together with

measures of reform and conciliation. He did not say that every Unionist member was bound to vote for every detail of Mr. Balfour's measure, or even for the second reading, but he did say they were bound to give the Bill every consideration.

Mr. Balfour introduced the Criminal Law Amendment Bill on the 28th of March. It proposed in the first place that magistrates should be empowered to hold inquiries into agrarian crimes even in cases in which no person was charged. Trial by jury—which he said could not be relied on in any case in which politics were involved—was to be abolished in cases of criminal conspiracy, boycotting, rioting, and offences under the Whiteboy Acts, in charges of assaulting officers of the law, of forcible and unlawful possession, or of inciting to any of these offences. Such cases were to be tried by two magistrates, who were to have power to impose a maximum penalty of six months' imprisonment. In cases of murder or attempt to murder, grave crimes of violence, arson, and breaking or firing into dwelling-houses, the accused might, on the certificate of the Attorney General for England and the Attorney General for Ireland, be brought over for trial in England. The Bill was only to apply to districts proclaimed by the Lord Lieutenant. The Lord Lieutenant was also to be empowered to make it an offence against the Act to be associated with attempts to interfere with the administration of the law, or with the maintenance of law and order. The Lord Lieutenant was further empowered to proclaim any Association to be illegal, provided that such Proclamation was laid before Parliament within seven days if it was sitting; if Parliament were not sitting it was to be summoned for the purpose; and an address from either House would nullify the Proclamation. Finally, though the Bill was limited in space it was unlimited in time.

The Chief Secretary had rested the case for the Bill on the prevalence in some districts, of agrarian crime. The Queen's Speech had declared that grave crimes had been



happily rarer than in a similar period in the preceding year ; Mr. Balfour had to show, by inference if not by actual statement, that they had been more frequent. He did this by giving the number of persons who were under police protection ; by quoting from the charges of judges who referred to lawlessness rather than to actual crime, and by a number of "narratives" and "anecdotes," as he called them, which he had obtained, he said, on his own responsibility from what he considered authentic sources. He quoted cases of "boycotting," and gave extracts from the speeches of Irish members which, he contended, showed designs of ruining the landlord class, and of separating Ireland from the United Kingdom. Having drawn the gloomy picture of a disturbed country in which nothing was safe, he replied to Mr. Gladstone's charge that the Bill was one for putting down agitation. "Our Bill," said Mr. Balfour, "is a Bill not for putting down agitation, but for enforcing the law ; and the law we wish to enforce is not the law which establishes or which regulates the relations between landlord and tenant ; the law which we want to enforce is that which gives to every man in this country and in every other country security for his life and property, the law which prevents your pocket from being picked and your head from being broken. It is the law which enables you to go home with some security that a midnight murderer will not invade your dwelling, possibly shoot you and drag your wife and daughters out of bed. There are those who talk as if Irishmen were justified in disputing the law because the law comes to them under a foreign garb. I see no reason why any local colour should be given to the Ten Commandments."

This line of argument was addressed to the Dissident Liberals. The claim that the Bill was directed wholly and exclusively against rampant crime, was the only excuse by which professed opponents of Coercion could persuade themselves or satisfy their friends that they were doing right in supporting the Government. Mr. Balfour con-



stantly appealed to them, and threw on them the whole responsibility of rejecting the Bill. Again and again he hinted that the House might perhaps decline to pass the Bill, but that, he said, would make no difference in the duty of the Government. This heroic determination to sacrifice themselves in the sacred cause of order and law had been exhibited in vain fifteen months before. The desire of Lord Salisbury and his Ministry in January, 1886, to rush to the defence of Irish households against midnight assassins, had been laughed to scorn by Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Jesse Collings, and Mr. Collings had thrown his agricultural labourers resolution across their path and tripped them up. The Ministry had been in less hurry now. Their plans were more ingeniously laid. They had already secured the votes of the great bulk of the Dissident Liberals in three divisions in which the Irish Nationalists and the British Liberals had voted together; and there was hope of getting Mr. Chamberlain and his friends to make the further step. They had opposed the Tenants' Relief Bill, had voted against Mr. Parnell's amendment to the Address, and had consented to grant urgency for Mr. Balfour's measure. The whole future of the Ministry, the chance of carrying out the Tory programme of "government that does not flinch," now depended on Mr. Chamberlain's group. They needed perhaps some moral pressure, some kindling of their indignation against the Irish members and the Irish people, some reason for persuading themselves that they were only voting against crime and criminals. If this pressure could be successfully applied, the power which Lord Salisbury had resolved to ask for fourteen months before, the power Mr. Balfour now desired to enable him to carry out his policy of "Thorough," would be put into their hands.

It is in this necessity of getting the votes of men who went with reluctance into the new career of repression, that the key to the events of the spring of 1887 is to be found. In the House of Commons the debate went against the Ministry. On the 29th of March, the second night of the

discussion, Mr. Gladstone traversed Mr. Balfour's statements corrected his statistics, and quoted the charges of judges which declared the country to be unusually free from crime. Mr. Parnell, on the first of April, moved an amendment that the House should resolve itself into a Committee to consider the state of Ireland. At half-past twelve Mr. T. P. O'Connor moved the adjournment, which Mr. Gladstone supported and Mr. W. H. Smith resisted; and it was negatived by 361 to 253. Mr. Smith then moved the Closure, which was carried by the same numbers. Most of the Opposition then left the House, and the Bill was read a first time without a division. The Closure division, which was virtually a division on the first reading, showed that the Government had been entirely successful in carrying the Dissentient Liberals with them in their Coercion policy. Seventy of the Dissentients voted for the Closure, among them Mr. John Bright, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Caine, Mr. George Dixon, and Mr. William Kenrick. Every effort had been made to get these seventy votes. Lord Cadogan had introduced in the House of Lords the Irish Land Bill, which was proposed as a concession to those who would only vote for Coercion if Amelioration went with it. On the night of the division a concession was ostentatiously made to Mr. Chamberlain. At the opening of the sitting Dr. Clark moved the adjournment of the House that he might call attention to the grievance of the Crofters, who were subject to eviction for arrears, before they could get their rents fixed by the Commission appointed in the year before. Mr. Balfour, representing for the occasion the Scottish Office, said that nothing could be done. There was, no doubt, a flaw in the Act, but no landlord had taken advantage of it. Mr. Chamberlain said Dr. Clark had shown a blot in the Act, and he strongly urged that it should be removed. Mr. Balfour at once became compliant, and promised careful consideration of Mr. Chamberlain's suggestion. The Dissentient Liberals felt themselves to be masters. They

held the fate of the Government in the hollow of their hands.

While the debates on the Crimes Bill were proceeding, there were many indications of public feeling outside the House. Mr. Watson, the member for the Ilkeston division of Derbyshire, died on the seventh of March, the day on which Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's resignation and Mr. Arthur Balfour's appointment had been announced. An election in a popular constituency at such a turning point in the policy of the Government was of the greatest interest and importance. The candidates were Sir Walter Foster, Liberal, and Mr. Leeke, Conservative. In 1886 Mr. Watson had got 4,621 votes, and Mr. Leeke 3,793. In the poll of the 24th of March, 1887, Sir Walter Foster received 5,512 votes, and Mr. Leeke 4,180. The Liberal majority was therefore swollen from 828 to 1,332. On the 30th Mr. John Morley took the chair at a meeting of the Council of the London Liberal and Radical Union at the Memorial Hall. Professor Stuart moved and Sir William Gurdon seconded a motion protesting against the return to Coercion, which was carried unanimously. Mr. Morley went through the proposals of the Bill—"this black and sinister Bill," as he called it; and especially protested against the clause "as grotesque as it is malignant, and as silly as it is atrocious," by which prisoners, in certain cases, were to be brought to this country to be tried. "Think what it means," said Mr. Morley; "you are to bring an Irish peasant from the West of Ireland who, as I know to have been the case in hundreds and thousands of instances, has never been so far even as his own county town, and certainly not to Dublin, and to whom coming to England and to the Old Bailey will be every bit as extraordinary an experience as it is to a Russian to go to Siberia." Mr. Morley hinted that excited and enthusiastic processions would see such prisoners off from Kingstown, and that similar processions would meet them in England. The hint was taken up with enthusiasm, first by the Council of the London Liberal



and Radical Union, and then by Liberals all over the country. It became evident that every victim of Coercion who was brought over to this country to be tried would be the object of a great political demonstration. Eventually Mr. Balfour had to withdraw a clause which showed not only, as Mr. Morley said, "an infatuated want of insight into the whole sentiment of the Irish people," but a still greater ignorance of English feeling.

On the last day of March Lord Salisbury met his supporters at the Foreign Office, and Lord Hartington called the Dissident Liberals together at Devonshire House. Lord Salisbury and Mr. W. H. Smith successfully urged their supporters to sacrifice comfort and pleasure, and even needed rest, in order to get the Coercion Bill through; and Mr. Goschen, whose presence at the meeting of the Tory party was loudly cheered, undertook to represent their unanimous feeling to Lord Hartington's friends. The Devonshire House meeting was less cheerful. The Tory party went back to Coercion like St. Peter's sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire; but the revolted Liberals were dragged reluctantly after them into the bog. A few of these, Lord Hartington said, felt themselves committed by their declarations at the General Election, or by their previous action, against the support, in any circumstances whatever, of a policy which could be called one of Coercion. But he thought that if the large majority of the party were agreed in the support of the Government Bill, the fact should be made known. They must not leave the whole burden on the Conservative party, but must be ready to make any sacrifice which might be needful in giving the Government useful and effective support. Mr. Chamberlain announced his intention to vote for the first reading, on the understanding that the remedial measures which were to go with repression, would make it impossible that the new powers given to the Executive should be used to enable landlords to exact excessive rents. The result of the meeting was to enable Mr. Goschen to assure his



colleagues in the Government, that their allies on the other side of the House of Commons would not fail them at the pinch.

Fortified by these assurances of support, Mr. Balfour moved the second reading of the Crimes Bill on the fifth of April. Sir Bernhard Samuelson moved an amendment refusing to pass the Bill, on the ground that it would tend to increase disorder in Ireland. In the course of his speech he said that in his own Banbury division of Oxfordshire, the cases of boycotting were as atrocious as any that had been brought before the House by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and as to intimidation, the poor agricultural labourers in the English counties had reason to know, during the late severe winter, that intimidation prevailed in England as well as in Ireland. Sir Joseph Pease, who seconded the amendment, reminded the House that no one had endeavoured to govern Ireland by coercion without his face becoming more serious and his hair more grey, and finding cause to regret that he had taken up the Herculean task. The debate was continued by Mr. Chaplin, Sir Charles Russell, and the Solicitor General, was resumed on the Wednesday sitting of the next day, and then adjourned till after the holidays. The time was an anxious one for the Government. It was not quite clear whether the Bill would be carried. Opposition to it in the country was growing every day. Meetings were held, and strong resolutions were passed in almost every constituency, all the Liberal Associations found themselves strengthened by their resolve to get rid of the Dissentients who supported Coercion, and multitudes who had opposed Home Rule and voted against their party in July, found themselves once more in hearty sympathy and active co-operation with old political friends. On Wednesday, the sixth of April, a great meeting of the National Liberal Federation was held in London, Sir James Kitson in the chair, at which the protest against Coercion took a national shape. In the evening Mr. John Morley spoke at a great

meeting at the Victoria Hall, in the Waterloo Road. "They call their Bill," said Mr. Morley, "an engine for quenching a conflagration. There is no conflagration. It is not that. The time was when the Irish peasant saw no light on his horizon save that which shone upon it across the floods of the great Atlantic; but now he sees a new light nearer home. He looks no longer westward alone; he looks eastward too, and he sees the beacon of hope and sympathy from England which will not die out. This ill-omened measure which we have begun our campaign against to-night, is a measure for dashing out this beacon light. It will fail. The light will still shine, and we English Liberals, if I may speak for them, at whatever cost to ourselves, will never rest until the people are no longer mocked, but enjoy the same reality of constitutional privileges and civil rights which have made the glory and the strength of our own Island."

This was the spirit in which the Liberals took up the contest against Coercion. So strong and general was the response, that the Government and its supporters were alarmed. *The Times* in a leading article on Good Friday morning, gave characteristic expression to their fears. "What is the history of the Session?" it asked. "It is a history," it replied, "of obstinate, persistent, and ingeniously contrived efforts to prevent the Government from taking the sense of the House of Commons, on the momentous question raised in the Speech from the Throne, —the question whether the Ministers of the Crown, representing the will of the nation, or the National League, representing an American-Irish conspiracy, are to govern Ireland." As the Speech from the Throne contained no hint of any such question, this statement forcibly illustrated the character of the "facts" of which *The Times* was daily making use. No reader of the article turned back to the Speech to test this imaginary description of its contents just as no ordinary reader of "Parnellism and Crime," took the trouble to investigate the evidence on which the charges

against the Irish members were based. They took for granted that, as *The Times* said in this Good Friday article, it had shown "the close and continuous connection between Mr. Parnell and his principal lieutenants, and the wretches who exult in the Phoenix Park assassination as a national victory." "We can assure the organizers of demonstrations, protests, and all the stock-in-trade of political scene shifters," wrote *The Times*, "that they will not be permitted to forget, or to make the people forget, how agitation is allied with obstruction." The constituencies had decided by an overwhelming majority against Home Rule. "If at the very outset, the will of the majority is to be defied, if the measures of the Government supported by the majority are to be obstructed, if there is to be an appeal from the decisions of the House of Commons to mobs organized in the interests of a party, and maddened with the drugs of faction, if it is a matter of open boasting that by these means Parliament is to be terrorized into submission, the future of Parliamentary government is, indeed, at stake. We hope and believe that the common sense, the sober courage, and the national pride of Englishmen, will repel and rebuke these vagaries of revolutionary folly, or of what is more spiteful and malignant,—a wounded and restless vanity."

Mr. John Morley's speech, and this article in *The Times*, fitly represent the character and the spirit of the two parties in the Easter holidays of 1887. The four days of pause in the Parliamentary discussion were used by the Liberals in an appeal to the better feelings of the nation, which met with immediate response. A letter was published in all the papers which Mr. Gladstone had addressed to *The North Eastern Daily Gazette*, as an appeal to the mining population of the North. He spoke of the meeting to be held in Hyde Park on Easter Monday, to which tens of thousands of the working men of London intended generously to devote their holiday. He reminded them that this was the first time a Coercion Bill was to be passed



by the vote of England alone against the views of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales ; that it would be the first time such a Bill had been passed by the votes of the householders, and without an attempt to show a state of exceptional, flagrant, or growing crime. "In 1876," said Mr. Gladstone, "a meeting of the working men of London first gave effectual force to the movement for Bulgaria, which brought about the election of 1880. May the meeting of Monday next, ring the death-knell of the worst, most insulting, most causeless Coercion Bill ever submitted to Parliament." The working men of London had a brilliant April day for their anti-Coercion holiday. The streets were clear of the ordinary business traffic, and the whole population seemed to have turned out in their holiday clothes to see the sight. The processions as they moved through the crowded thoroughfares on their way to Hyde Park, were received with manifestations of approval and sympathy. There were no signs of opposition. The ordinary roughs of London seemed to have taken their holiday out of town. The vast crowds went to the Park to be themselves impressed, and to impress others with their numbers and enthusiasm. In various parts of the country, similar meetings were held ; and not only the working men, but leading statesmen and politicians gave up their Easter holiday to a national protest against Mr. Balfour's Bill.

This remarkable movement of the public mind followed very closely the analogy which Mr. Gladstone suggested in his letter. The autumn agitation in 1876 swept away the last traces of the Tory reaction, and of the Liberal apathy of 1874 ; and the Easter agitation of 1887, overcame the hesitation which had kept thousands of Liberals from the poll in 1886. The position taken by the Liberal party in that election was now clearly demonstrated to be the true one. Mr. Gladstone and his supporters had contended that there was no middle course in Irish legislation between Home Rule and severe repression, between Coercion and self-government. The Dissident Liberals professed not



only that there was a middle way, but that they would take it and carry the Government with them. The Coercion Bill was the conclusive proof of their failure. Instead of carrying the Tory party with them along their fancied middle way, they were themselves being dragged as a Tory tail into the forsaken pathway of oppression, and the majority of their supporters in the constituencies not only refused to follow them, but went back to join their friends. The time had come when the final choice between Coercion and Home Rule must be made. The Dissident Liberals in Parliament chose Coercion; the great bulk of the Dissidents in the constituencies made choice of Home Rule.

The Tories and their allies were almost as active as the Liberals. The Tory organizations met and passed strong resolutions in support of the Government; in some places, as at Bristol and Sheffield, meetings were held in favour of the Coercion Bill, and Mr. Chamberlain went down to Ayr, and made a great speech on behalf of the Government and its policy. The tone of all the meetings on the popular side, was one of sympathy for the Irish poor in their sufferings and wrongs; on the other side nothing was told but exaggerated stories of Irish crime. Mr. Chamberlain assumed the attitude of heroic self-sacrifice. "I cannot conceal from you, I cannot conceal from myself," he said, "the gravity, the momentous gravity of the struggle in which we are engaged. There is difficulty and annoyance—aye, and danger—for all of us. There is no one who has taken a prominent part in this controversy, who has not been threatened and marked down for assassination. That is, perhaps, a small matter. I do not know that they are in greater danger than the soldier on the battle-field; and of this I am sure, that if any of them fall, there will be scores and hundreds in this country of ours, ready and willing to take their places. But what adds bitterness to the situation, is the fact that our foes, our irreconcilable enemies, have the sympathy and support of those whom

we desire should be our friends. I listened the other night in the House of Commons to Mr. Parnell, when he told us, under the specious guise of warning, that if this Bill passed, there would be a renewal of outrage in our streets, of dynamite explosions, and of attempts at assassination of our statesmen (cries of "Shame" and "No"). He did, and our colleagues, our late colleagues and our friends, listened with mild complacency to the grim and dangerous suggestion which was made in their hearing, and which may yet prove to be the death-warrant of some or other of us."

History need not concern itself with the question whether Mr. Chamberlain really believed in the danger he thus described. Whether he worked himself up into a condition of political hysteria, or only tried to work upon his audience, the result was the same. He and his friends were now the apologists of Coercion, ready to support a Tory administration in passing the most stringent measure for the restriction of personal freedom, which had been applied to Ireland since the times of the two latest Georges. The policy of the Government was to give the Dissident Liberals an excuse for this betrayal, by associating the Nationalist members with crime, charging Mr. Gladstone and Lord Spencer, Mr. John Morley and Sir William Harcourt, and Mr. Stansfeld, and all the Liberals who had rallied to their Home Rule policy, with conscious and intentional patronage of their crime, and association with it. Mr. Chamberlain fell an easy victim to such a design. He started out with a bad opinion of Irishmen, and he allowed his dislike to overrule his judgment. He never could really have believed that his old colleagues on the front bench could listen with mild complacency to suggestions of assassination; and there was not a cool-headed Scotchman in his audience at Ayr, who thought that he believed it. It was one of the insincerities which a false position had forced upon him. It was a trick of controversy he had caught from daily reading it in *The Times*.

He had felt the influence on a receptive mind of the charges brought forward in "Parnellism and Crime." There was a time in Macbeth's history when, as he said to Seyton,—

My senses would have cooled,  
To hear a night shriek, and my fell of hair,  
Would at a dismal treatise, rouse and stir,  
As life were in it.

Mr. Chamberlain's fell of hair had roused and stirred at the dismal treatises of *The Times*, and he half imagined they were true. He had heard the day shrieks at Mr. Gladstone's league with criminals, till he caught the trick of the rhetoric and shrieked himself. *The Times* of course took Mr. Chamberlain's alarms as serious. Writing about his speech on the next day, it said: "The people of this country do not know, they have not realized, the depths to which once trusted statesmen have sunk in their desperate resolve to keep company with men who shrink from no crime." The people of this country realized, however, what all these charges meant. They regarded them as the rotten eggs which were used by roughs as electioneering arguments in the olden time.

While the agitation was going on outside, in Parliament the debate on the second reading of the Crimes Bill was proceeding. The House of Commons reassembled on Tuesday, the 12th of April, when the adjourned debate was resumed, and was continued all the week. On Friday night Colonel Saunderson, in the course of a speech of characteristic violence, accused the Irish members of associating with men they knew to be murderers. Mr. T. M. Healy and Mr. Sexton appealed to the Speaker, who said the charge was very serious, but did not contravene Parliamentary rules. Mr. Healy then said: "If the honourable and learned gentleman refers to me, I have no hesitation in telling him across the floor of the House that he is a liar!" Mr. Healy refused to withdraw the expression, and was suspended. Mr. Sexton then took up



the challenge. Colonel Saunderson, in answer to questions, repeated the charge. Mr. Sexton thereupon exclaimed: "I say you are a wilful and cowardly liar!"—the Irish members rising and cheering. The Speaker insisted on Colonel Saunderson explaining away or withdrawing the charge, which he eventually did, and the process was several times repeated amid the greatest excitement and uproar. On Monday morning *The Times* returned to the charge. "In view of the unblushing denials of Mr. Sexton and Mr. Healy on Friday night," it said, "we do not think it right to withhold any longer from public knowledge the fact that we possess, and have had in our custody for some time, documentary evidence which has a most serious bearing upon the Parnellite conspiracy, and which, after a most careful and minute scrutiny, is, we are satisfied, quite authentic." It then published in *facsimile* the following letter:—

15/5/82.

DEAR SIR,

I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce the murders was the only course open to us. To do that promptly was plainly our best policy.

But you can tell him, and all others concerned, that though I regret the accident of Lord F. Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts.

You are at liberty to show him this and others whom you can trust also, but let not my address be known. He can write to House of Commons.

Yours very truly,

CHAS. S. PARNELL.

The publication of this letter intensified the public excitement. It was accompanied and followed up by the most emphatic assurances of the care and inquiry by which its genuineness had been ascertained. In commenting on it, *The Times* once more repeated all its charges against the Irish members, taunted them with not bringing actions for libel against it, and said the letter which it published that day had no unimportant bearing on their contradictions of its statements. "What is the estimate to be



formed of the value of disclaimers and denials when we have before us proof, not to be easily rejected, that they represent no more than the convenience of the moment?" Day by day *The Times* asserted and reasserted, with every variety of detail, that it was prepared to prove the genuineness of the letter. Neither the writers of these articles, nor the public who read them, could have suspected the incredible carelessness with which the business manager of *The Times*, the late Mr. Macdonald, had allowed himself to be deceived as to the letter, and others which succeeded it. Those who had carefully read "Parnellism and Crime," and had seen how flimsy and unsubstantial was the basis on which the charges rested, never believed in the genuineness of the letters; but so loud, so confident, so repeated were the assurances in the leading articles of *The Times*, that some of the best friends of the Irish cause felt obliged to suspend their judgment. The Tories and their Liberal allies did not wait to inquire. They at once accepted the letter as genuine, and based upon it renewed attacks on the Irish members and on the Liberals who opposed the Coercion Bill. It was unanswerable proof of commerce with assassins.

The debate on the second reading of the Coercion Bill was resumed in the evening of the same day by Mr. Sexton, who denounced the letter as a malignant forgery. Lord Hartington, who followed, quoted passages from the articles in *The Times*; and, while constantly dissociating himself from them, taunted the Irish members with the absence of any legal disproof. "I am not making myself responsible for these statements," he said, "but I say that these are allegations the truth of which is not disproved, and the untruth of which it is open to the honourable member to prove, if he thinks it worth while to do so, or if he thinks it possible." Mr. Gladstone, in opposing the second reading, went through the history of Coercion Bills since the Reform Act, and showed that the causes which made such measures needful were not in existence now.

The present Bill was directed against combination: not against crime. It did not deal with existing crimes; it created new ones. Mr. Balfour, who rose with Mr. Parnell, and for a time prevented him from speaking, taunted Mr. Gladstone with not alluding to the charges against the Irish members, and challenged Mr. Parnell to disprove that he was the writer of the letter published in *The Times*. Mr. Parnell replied that, with characteristic unfairness, Mr. Balfour had denied him the ten or twelve minutes he would have craved to refer to the villainous and barefaced forgery which had appeared in *The Times* of that morning, for the purpose of influencing the division. Mr. Parnell's emphatic repudiation of the letter was received with shouts of mocking laughter from the Tory benches, but he held on till the laughter ceased. "I never had the slightest notion in the world," he said, "that the life of the late Mr. Forster was in danger, or that any conspiracy was on foot against him or against any other official in Ireland or elsewhere. I had no more notion than an unborn child of such a conspiracy as that of the Invincibles, and no one was more astonished than I when that bolt from the blue fell upon us in the Phoenix Park murders. I knew not in what direction to look for that calamity. It is no exaggeration to say that if I had been in the Park that day I would gladly have stood between Lord Frederick Cavendish and the daggers of the assassins, and, for the matter of that—(cries of "Burke!")—between their daggers and Mr. Burke." It was said afterwards that it was only after a slight pause, and in response to a challenge from the House, that Mr. Parnell referred to Mr. Burke at all. This was said in order to support the charge that he had written the letter *The Times* had published. It is disproved, however, by the report in *The Times* itself, which shows that he was already referring to Mr. Burke when the "cries of 'Burke'" were interposed. Mr. Parnell's speech concluded the debate, and the second reading was carried by 370 to 269—a majority of 101.

## CHAPTER XII.

*THE COERCION BILL FORCED THROUGH.*

WHILE the debate on the second reading of the Coercion Bill was proceeding in the House of Commons a far livelier discussion was going on outside. The Liberal party, outnumbered by the Coercionist Coalition in the House of Commons, turned to the constituencies. There was a kind of new appeal to the country, carried on by one party by means of exaggerated accounts of the state of Ireland, and charges against their opponents of sympathy with crime, while the other party told the story of the evictions, and showed the application of Liberal principles to the Irish difficulty. The result of the Campaign of Calumny led by the authors of "Parnellism and Crime" was the revival of Tory feeling ; the consequence of the Liberal propaganda was the practical reconstitution and reunion of the Liberal party. Even before the second reading of the Coercion Bill, it had become evident that the Liberal allies of the Tory Ministry were losing their followers in the constituencies. Their efforts to set up independent Liberal "Unionist" organizations met with very partial success. They had still some hope of Liberal reunion. In a speech at Edinburgh on the 16th of April Lord Hartington said that some day the Irish question would be settled, and it was "the duty of Liberal Unionists to do nothing that would impair the future reunion of the great, sound, moderate Liberalism which had done so much in past times for the progress and happiness of the people." But on the same day Mr. Chamberlain, who was making a sort of



public progress through Scotland on his way to look after the Crofter question, made a speech at Inverness. Referring to the suspension of Mr. Healy on the night before, for calling Colonel Saunderson a liar, when Colonel Saunderson had charged him with being friendly to murderers, Mr. Chamberlain said that Colonel Saunderson had accused the Irish members truly, and that in reply they "flung a violent and brutal accusation at him across the floor of the House of Commons." This was the spirit in which both sides of the Coercionist Coalition appealed to the country. The effort of the Liberals had been, and was, to close for ever the quarrel with Ireland, to redress the grievances of the Irish people, and to heal the wounds of Irish society, while Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Salisbury and Mr. Goschen went about scattering these "firebrands, arrows and death." The result necessarily was to make reunion impossible. Sir William Harcourt, speaking to a great meeting at Derby, made a friendly reference to Mr. Chamberlain, which was met with shouts of "Traitor!" A like reception was given to his name wherever it was mentioned at a Liberal meeting. The anger of the Liberals was excited, not so much by the support Mr. Chamberlain and his friends were giving to a Tory Government, as by the readiness they exhibited to take up the Campaign of Calumny which *The Times* had originated, and even to hurl charges of association with murderers against Mr. Gladstone himself.

The Liberal agitation outside the House of Commons met with remarkable success. It was taken up by some of the religious bodies, on the principle that the mission of the Church to the World is one of breaking every yoke and letting the oppressed go free. On the 15th of April a protest against Coercion was published with the names of 3,200 Nonconformist ministers. On the next day a meeting of the Liberal Two Thousand was held at Birmingham, with Mr. George Dixon in the chair, and a resolution condemning the Coercion Bill was carried by a large majority ;



Sir William Harcourt addressed a great meeting at Derby ; Sir Lyon Playfair spoke at a mass meeting at Leeds ; and there was hardly a town in the kingdom in which a meeting of protest was not held. Sir George Trevelyan greatly helped the movement by a letter in which he pointed out that, in administering the Crimes Act of 1882, Lord Spencer and he had drawn a deep and clear line between politics and crime. Their policy was to punish the "house-breakers, moonlighters, murderers, and criminals generally," to whom alone Mr. Chamberlain pretended that Mr. Balfour's Bill would apply, but to leave politicians untouched. Sir George Trevelyan showed that the Bill would give the counsellors of the Lord Lieutenant an amount of power over the liberties of their countrymen, far exceeding anything that could be imagined or believed by those who had not been behind the scenes of Irish administration. The Government and some of its supporters knew, all through, that this was the character of the Bill ; for in a speech at Edinburgh on the 17th of April, Lord Hartington said that there was a revolutionary party in Ireland which had acquired undue influence over the people, and which must be contended with and overthrown. There, said Mr. Gladstone, after quoting the words, is the key to the Coercion Bill in the mind of Lord Hartington. Another indication of the true direction of Mr. Balfour's policy was the appointment of Colonel King-Harman—whom the Nationalists regarded as a deserter—to be Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. This selection was distasteful to many of the Conservatives, but Mr. Balfour paid no attention to their views. He had taken office not to be guided but to guide.

The publication of the alleged letter from Mr. Parnell, was received by the Tory party as a triumphant demonstration of all that they were saying against the Irish members. It had been cleverly prepared by Richard Pigott to meet their state of mind. Just as the managers of *The Times* had purchased it on an instinctive feeling that the Mr. Parnell

they had in their minds would naturally write such a letter, so the Coalition and their leaders accepted it as too good, too useful, too entirely conclusive not to be true. Not only had the Ministerial majority in the House of Commons received Mr. Parnell's indignant repudiation of it with shouts of laughter, but the leaders of the party showed the utmost diligence in using the weapon thus put into their hands. Lord Randolph Churchill, speaking on the 19th of April in the Albert Hall at Nottingham, referred to the letter, and to the pamphlet entitled "Parnellism and Crime," and followed Lord Hartington's example in taunting the Irish members with reluctance to prosecute *The Times* for libel. He quoted a passage from the pamphlet, which said: "Be the ultimate goal of these men what it may, they are content to march towards it in company with murderers. Murderers provide their funds; murderers share their inmost counsels; murderers have gone forth from the League offices to set their bloody work afoot, and have presently returned to consult with the constitutional leaders on the advancement of their cause." In contradiction of every maxim of English law or natural justice, Lord Randolph Churchill told his audience that they might assume there was truth in these charges if the Irish representatives did not disprove them. On the next day Lord Salisbury took up the Campaign of Calumny. Speaking as a Grand Master at a meeting of the Fourth Grand Habitation of the Primrose League, he concentrated a whole series of charges against Mr. Parnell into the single inuendo: "When the gentleman who intimately knew Mr. Parnell murdered Mr. Burke." Later on in the same speech, he said: "Mr. Parnell has been publicly accused of approving of murder. He has been challenged to bring that accusation to a test in a court of law, and to go into the witness-box at least, and swear that it is not true. As far as I understand what has been said, that challenge he has refused, at all events, his friends have refused it for him." Encouraged probably by the cheers which greeted

these statements, Lord Salisbury essayed a higher flight, and sought to associate Mr. Gladstone with murderers. "His trusted friends," said Lord Salisbury, speaking of Mr. Gladstone, "His trusted friends have mixed on terms of comradeship and intimacy with those whose advocacy of assassination is well known, and the language of himself and his friends, in speaking of the fearful crimes which have been committed in Ireland, has not been above reproach. It has been marked by indifference to and perhaps even by a tolerance of murder. . . . You may go back to the beginning of the British Government, you may go back from decade to decade, and from leader to leader, but you will never find a man who has accepted a position in reference to an ally, tainted with the strong presumption of conniving at assassination, which has been accepted by Mr. Gladstone at the present time." It is quite possible that, in looking back on these expressions, these foul blows in the political conflict, Lord Salisbury may regret that he ever gave utterance to them. It is quite certain that history will regard them as dark blots upon his fame. In his own words, "You may go back from decade to decade, and from leader to leader, but you will never find a man" who has accepted the position of leader of a great party, who has descended to the use of these explosive bullets of controversy.

So far as the Dissident Liberals were concerned, the violent tactics of the Tory leaders met with complete success. The only chance for the Tories was in preventing Liberal reunion. On any day in which the seventy or seventy-three Dissidents voted with the party to which they professed to belong, the Government would be thrown out. In the first few months of the life of the new Parliament it was not known how far the Government could reckon on the support of their crutch. Hence the half promise, in the short autumn session of 1886, to give relief to the tenants from whose holdings economic rent had for the time disappeared. Hence, too, Lord Randolph



Churchill's Dartford programme ; Lord Salisbury's offer to Lord Hartington ; and the mild administration of Ireland by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. But Lord Hartington's landlord sympathies, Mr. Chamberlain's personal distrust of Mr. Gladstone and violent antipathy to the Irish Nationalists, encouraged the Government to let its Conservative instincts have their way. The two Liberal sections were drifting further and further apart in feeling, when the "Parnellism and Crime" articles made their appearance. Among the wealthy classes these articles made a great impression ; in the country generally they fell flat. The Liberal Dissentients went with the few ; the Liberals themselves went with the many. The Tories had begun to talk of Coercion early in the session, and their Liberal allies did not break away in protest. It was with Coercion as Pope says it is with vice, "We first endure, then pity, then embrace." The Dissentient Liberals scorned the idea of Coercion at the election in 1886, they thought better of it when the winter brought no reconciliation with their old friends, they began to talk of it themselves when, early in the New Parliament, it became evident that Ireland would still block the way, and they voted for it with enthusiasm at length. Mr. Balfour went to the Irish Office just when it was felt that the time to carry out the Tory policy had come. The Coercion Bill was to be the wedge with which the rift in the Liberal party was to be widened into a complete rupture. If the Dissentients could be brought to vote for a strong Coercion Bill, the wedge would be driven home, the severance on the other side of the House would be complete ; and the Dissentients would become the most devoted allies and supporters of the Government. The force by which all this was to be accomplished was created by violent appeals to prejudice and passion. The poor Irish tenants were forgotten in the storm of abuse which was poured upon their advocates. The Dissentients laid aside their desire to give Ireland equal treatment with Great Britain, in an outburst of anger at stories of crime. It all happened as it



was planned. The Coercion Bill was a scheme for giving the Government a long lease of power, by making it impossible for the Liberal Dissentients to rejoin their former friends, and binding them to perpetual coalition with their hereditary foes.

On the day after the publication of the forged letter Mr. Gladstone spoke at a banquet at Willis's Rooms as the guest of the Eighty Club. He spoke gently of Lord Hartington's unhesitating adoption of the charges against the Irish members, and asked whether it was fair to go about the world and launch outrageous charges, and then tell the man who is the object of them, "You have got your remedy if you will give me conclusive demonstration of their untruth." "With whom," asked Mr. Gladstone, "does the burden of the proof lie? There is the heart of the whole question. The burden of proof lies on those who make the charge, and unless they make the charge with evidence that will bear the test of investigation, and will carry with it, at the very least, the highly rational probability of truth, they are wanton calumniators, and should be shunned as pests to society." Sir William Harcourt addressed a vast meeting on the next night in Shoreditch Town Hall, and a crowded overflow meeting in Mr. Cuff's Tabernacle close by. Sir William Harcourt reminded his great audience of the charges brought against O'Connell, and of Sir Robert Peel's passionate accusation against Mr. Cobden of inciting to assassination. Peel, however, had the grace to make acknowledgment of wrong, and reparation afterwards. Sir William Harcourt confirmed the statements of Lord Spencer and Sir George Trevelyan, that no evidence had ever been discovered by the late Government, either in England or in Ireland, of any complicity of Irish members of Parliament with the criminal associations, whose doings had been fully known to them when they were in office. Mr. W. R. Cremer thanked the Government for a Bill which had reunited the Liberal party; and at a Conference of the National Liberal

Federation at Wolverhampton Mr. John Morley said the Bill had awakened thousands and tens of thousands of Liberals, to what it was they did last July when they rejected Mr. Gladstone's policy. So the agitation went on. It had little effect on the House of Commons, but it carried the country.

Mr. Dillon put Lord Hartington on his defence by calling the attention of the House of Commons to some of his statements. In the debate on the Crimes Bill Lord Hartington said that two well-known persons, acting under Mr. Dillon's direction, had gone about making speeches counselling assassination. That was a most odious charge, and Mr. Dillon, in his place in Parliament, asked Lord Hartington to furnish particulars of dates, abstracts of speeches, and references to the circumstances to which he alluded. "I shall be able to show him," said Mr. Dillon, "that his statement is without foundation." On the next day Lord Hartington went to the House with the pamphlet "*Parnellism and Crime*" in his pocket, and in response to Mr. Dillon's appeal, on the day before, read various extracts from it. "If it were in my power," he said, "or if I were to attempt to substantiate those charges by going outside the reference which *The Times* has made, I should make myself responsible—which I have not done—for the charges made." Mr. Dillon replied at length, pointing out the absolutely false construction which had been put on his words and his acts, as well as on those of other persons mentioned in that pamphlet. Of the charge of Mr. Boyton telling a story of the man in America who sent "five dollars for bread and twenty for lead," Mr. Dillon said "He made some joke about this. We all understood what it meant. These men belonged to the physical force party in America, as most of our people there did, and it meant that if Mr. Parnell stirred up conspiracy in Ireland, there were five dollars to go for bread, and twenty to supply them with arms to overthrow the Government. The question of assassination never entered into the

matter at all." Lord Hartington said he made no charge, the charges were made by *The Times*. But he did not attempt to explain, as Mr. Dillon had asked him, by what principle, or on what maxim of honour, a man of Lord Hartington's position "is entitled to get up in this House and give currency by his speeches to the foulest and most criminal charges against other members of the House, stating that he considers that because he constantly referred to these charges as made not on his own responsibility, but on that of *The Times* newspaper, he therefore washes his hands of all responsibility for repeating them." To this searching question Lord Hartington made no reply.

The motion that the House should go into Committee on the Crimes Bill was made on the 26th of April, when Mr. Robert Reid moved, "That this House declines to proceed further with a measure for strengthening the Criminal law against combinations of tenants, until it has before it the full measure of their relief against excessive rents, in the shape in which it may pass the other House of Parliament." In the course of the debate on the first night, Lord Wolmer repeated the challenge to Mr. Parnell to bring an action against *The Times*. That paper, he said, would then have to give in at once, or to plead justification, and the burden of proof would rest upon it. "On *The Times* failing to prove that the letter is genuine," said Lord Wolmer—"and I can think of few things more difficult to prove—not only will the honourable member for Cork gain enormous damages and ruin his chief journalistic foe, but he will deal a deadly blow at the Unionist party." This frank confession of the almost entire dependence of the Coalition on the Campaign of Calumny, contained a prophecy, though Lord Wolmer did not even suspect the rottenness of the foundation on which the hopes of his party were built. Everything went well with it in the House of Commons. The debate on Mr. Reid's motion was continued on Wednesday afternoon and on Thursday



evening, when it was concluded by a speech from Mr. John Morley, who said it was remedial measures which tested the resources of statesmanship. "Anybody can pass a Coercion Bill," he said, "but not anybody can undo the mischief that coercive Bills have always done, and which this Coercion Bill will do beyond all others. It is because we believe that it will do none of the good that you anticipate, but that it will do an enormous and an irreparable mischief at a critical moment in the relations of England and Ireland, that we protest against it at this point, and shall continue to protest against it at every point as it arises." The amendment was rejected by 341 against 240; a majority for Coercion of 101. Three of the Dissident Liberals again opposed the Government, fifty-four supported it, and twenty were absent. Had these Liberals voted against Coercion the Bill would have been defeated by a majority of twenty-seven.

The pretended letter by Mr. Parnell played a large part in the discussion of Mr. Balfour's Bill both in and out of Parliament. *The Times* followed it up day by day with assurances of its genuineness, and taunts at Mr. Parnell for not bringing it to the test of a court of law. An article entitled "The National League at Work," together with the facsimile letter and the leading articles of *The Times* upon it, was published as a second series of "Parnellism and Crime," simultaneously with a third large edition of the first series. On the second of May *The Times* published a further article under the familiar heading, in which it attempted to show that Mr. Dillon had deliberately misled the House of Commons in his denials as to "his own connection and that of his brother members of Parliament with P. J. Sheridan, Invincible, dynamiter and assassin." On the next day Sir Charles Lewis, desiring to give the charges in this article all the publicity they could have, called attention to them under the pretence that they were a breach of the privileges of the House of Commons. He first read the chief passages himself, and then caused them

to be read again by the clerk at the table, and the whole article was eventually printed and circulated to members with the Orders of the Day. *The Times* was unable to see why Sir Charles Lewis, who did not appear to dissent from the allegations in question, should be called upon to protest. The Ministers and their supporters were indignant with their indiscreet supporter; the Irish members were delighted. Sir Charles Lewis moved that the article was a breach of privilege, which Mr. Muntz seconded. Mr. Dillon welcomed the motion, and asked the Speaker what would be the most convenient course for him to take in replying to the charges, which he had only read an hour or two before. The Speaker suggested the adjournment of the debate, which Mr. W. H. Smith jumped at, and moved at once, for the Government wanted time to consider what to do. Mr. Dillon said he had no desire for delay. If the House decided that a breach of privilege had been committed, he would at once enter into a defence and statement. But this was just what the Government and its majority wanted to avoid. Sir William Harcourt pointed out that the motion had been made as a personal attack on Mr. Dillon. It was a charge of falsehood advanced by the member for Antrim, under cover of *The Times*, against another member of the House, and the House must deal with it. Mr. Gladstone took the same view, pointing out, however, on the authority of Sir Thomas May's work, that a Select Committee was the proper tribunal to try the matter. The adjournment was carried by 213 to 174; and the debate occupied the whole of the next day's sitting, the Solicitor General moving, as an amendment to Sir Charles Lewis's motion, that the House declined to treat the matter as a question of privilege. Sir Charles Lewis's motion was defeated by 297 to 218; and then Mr. Gladstone moved, as an amendment to Sir E. Clarke's motion, that a Select Committee should be appointed to inquire into the charges. The debate was prolonged for two more nights, and in the early hours of Saturday morn-

ing, the 7th of May, Mr. Gladstone's amendment was defeated by 317 to 233, and the Solicitor General's motion was adopted. The one thing the Coalition and its supporters in the press were anxious to avoid, was a Parliamentary inquiry into charges which they believed were doing good service in the constituencies. In such an inquiry the Irish members would have been at no disadvantage from their comparative poverty, and the vast resources of *The Times* would have been but of small benefit to it. The inquiry would have been larger, wider, and less technical than could have been raised on a libel prosecution in a court of law, and would not have crushed the Irish members by its ruinous expense. It was the one form of investigation which the precedents demanded, but it was the one which *The Times*, the Government, and the Dissident Liberals felt that it would be ruinous to grant.

The House had gone into Committee on the Crimes Bill on the 29th of April, and it got through the first clause on the 17th of May. The clause was under consideration during eight sittings, one of which, on the night of Monday, the 9th of May, lasted till a quarter past six on the Tuesday morning. During the course of this long consideration the clause was completely transformed. Provisoes and modifications were introduced, which extended the seventeen lines of the original clause into fifty-one lines in the measure as it emerged from Committee. Sir William Harcourt tested the sincerity of the profession which had been made, that the Bill was only meant to deal with crime, by proposing to add to the first clause a proviso, exempting from its operation any matters relating to public meetings, to the letting or hiring of land, "or the dealing with, working for, or hiring any persons in the ordinary course of trade, business or occupation." After a long discussion, the amendment was rejected by a majority of sixty-two. On the 10th of June Mr. Smith proposed, on behalf of the Government, that at ten o'clock on Friday, the 17th of June, if the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill was



not previously reported from the Committee of the whole House, the Chairman should put the question forthwith, on any amendment or motion already proposed from the Chair. He was then to go on putting clause after clause without allowing any speech to be made or any amendment to be proposed, and when all the clauses had been put he was to report the Bill to the House. No motion to report progress or that the Chairman leave the Chair was to be allowed, unless it was made by one of the members in charge of the Bill. This drastic scheme for cutting short debate was opposed by Mr. Gladstone, who said that if thirty-five days had been given to this Bill, the Irish Land Bill of 1881 had occupied fifty-eight days. The way to expedite the passing of the Bill was, he said, to make it temporary instead of permanent, to strike out of it what touched combination, apart from crime, and to give the Irish tenant and cottier population the same protection, in respect to their land strikes, that is given to the English artisan in respect to his labour strikes. Sir William Harcourt turned the tables on the Tories by showing the glorious example they were setting to some Liberal majority in the future. He imagined a Minister, with 340 supporters and 330 opponents, standing at the table and saying, "I shall introduce to-morrow a Home Rule Bill, and I shall accompany it by a declaration that the third reading shall be taken this day fortnight." Or a Liberal Government might introduce a Bill for the disestablishment of the Church, and might reasonably say, "All that can be said against this Bill has been said already, and we shall take the third reading of it this day week." That was the kind of precedent which the coercionist majority established. They passed the resolution by 295 to 93, and they carried it out. On Friday, the 17th of June, the sixth clause was under consideration, and Sir Charles Russell was speaking on it, when ten o'clock struck and he sat down. The Chairman then put the clause, and the Irish members rose in their seats. Three times he asked them to sit down, but they refused, and left

the House without voting. Then the Committee divided, and Mr. Gladstone was loudly cheered as he walked into the lobby with the minority. The vote for the clause was 332 against 163, a majority of 169. The Liberal minority having to return to the House from behind the Speaker's chair, did not take their seats, but walked straight through and out at the door. Some Tories went across the floor and joined the Dissident Liberals, who remained, and thus the Coalition was left in possession of the Chamber. The fourteen remaining clauses were put and carried without a solitary opposing voice, a process which occupied just two minutes by the clock. At twenty-three minutes past ten the Speaker came back to the Chair, the Bill was reported to the House, and the next business was taken.

The success of this expedient for overriding opposition, led to its repetition on the next stage of the measure. The Bill came up for consideration on Report, on the 27th of June, when Mr. Robertson moved a new clause, providing that the Act might be repealed by an Order in Council, to be issued on an Address from either House of Parliament. Mr. Robertson did not take a division. Mr. John Morley proposed the limitation of the Bill to three years, which was negatived by 180 to 119, a majority of sixty-one. Mr. Chance moved a clause giving an appeal to any person convicted under the Act. This was rejected by a majority of only forty-nine. Other proposals for modifying the operation of the Bill were also rejected. On the 30th of June Mr. W. H. Smith moved a resolution fixing seven o'clock on Monday evening, the 4th of July, for the closure of the discussions on the Report stage of the Bill. This was carried by a majority of 100. After the division the great bulk of the Liberal and Nationalist members did not return to the House. The amendments standing in their names were rapidly put and negatived without divisions, and a few amendments by Mr. Balfour were made, among them one omitting the proviso for the bringing of Irish prisoners for trial in England. The Report of the Bill was

then agreed to, the whole proceeding being over within a quarter of an hour of the division on Mr. Smith's motion. The third reading was moved on the 7th of July, when Mr. Gladstone moved the rejection of the measure, in a speech in which he restated and summed up the objections of the Liberal party, to a return to the abandoned policy of repression and violence. The debate lasted two nights, and on a division the amendment was rejected by 349 to 262, a majority of 87. The Bill was then, at one o'clock in the morning of the 9th of July, read a third time and passed. Nine days later, on the 18th of July, it was read a third time and passed by the House of Lords, and received the Royal Assent on the next day.



## CHAPTER XIII.

*THE JUBILEE SESSION.*

THE Irish Land Bill was introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Cadogan on the last day of March, three days after Mr. Balfour had moved in the House of Commons for leave to bring in the Coercion Bill. The object of this measure was to smooth the way of the repressive Bill. It was a survival of the early days of the Coalition, when Lord Salisbury and his Cabinet were uncertain as to their tenure of office, and believed that the Dissident Liberals, on whose support they depended, would insist on the carrying out of the programme put before the country at the election. The Bill was based on the Report of the Royal Commission, but the Government did not attempt to carry out the recommendations of their own Commissioners. The chief features of that Report were the recommendation that the judicial rents, especially those which had been fixed before the year 1886, should be open to revision once in five years instead of once in fifteen years; and that the amount of the "fair" rent should be fixed in relation to the value of the produce of the land. An objection to the second of these suggestions had been urged by Lord Milltown, to the effect that high prices are often concurrent with bad years, and the rent might therefore be raised at a time when it would greatly distress the tenant. Lord Milltown, moreover, objected to the first suggestion on stronger grounds. He said that a revision of the rent every five years would diminish the value of the tenant-right. So it might, but only an almost infinitesimal

number of the tenants want to sell the succession to their tenancies, while every tenant is interested in the quick adjustment of his rent to the real value of his holding. The objection was therefore without force, and its only importance was that it gave the Government an excuse for refusing a very valuable concession. Lord Hartington encouraged them in their refusal. Ignoring all that had been urged by the highest authorities, as to the disappearance of economic rent from half a million of holdings, and disregarding the strong statements in the Report of the Royal Commission and in the evidence of official witnesses, Lord Hartington said, at a meeting of the Liberal Union on the 30th of March, that it was an open question, in the first place, whether rents were excessive in Ireland; and in the second place, whether, if they were excessive, such rents were being exacted. He concluded, therefore, that it would be wise and reasonable for Parliament to refuse to reopen the settlement of 1881. This was equivalent to saying that the case was a doubtful one, and that the landlords should have the benefit of the doubt.

This benefit the Bill gave them, though it did not leave the tenants to their tender mercies. The County Court was to have an equitable jurisdiction to hear complaints from tenants who could not pay their rents, to give them time when needful, and to make them bankrupts when they had no means of payment. The landlord who could not get his rent was to be excused from paying rates. Power was given to a landlord who had obtained a judgment of eviction against a tenant, to transform him into a care-taker without first turning him and his family and his household goods out of the home. Leaseholders were to be admitted to the Land Court to ask for judicial revision of their rents, and those who had sublet the lands they held on lease were to be allowed to throw up their leases when the Courts reduced the rents of their tenants. These concessions were too much for the landlord interest and too little for the relief of the tenants. When the Bill came on

for second reading in the House of Lords on the 21st of April there was a good deal of half-expressed dissatisfaction with it. Lord Spencer gave it partial approval, but objected to the bankruptcy proceedings, and Lord Ripon, replying to Lord Ashbourne, who had promised to consider objections in Committee, asked by what part of the measure the Government desired to stand. Lord Salisbury made a significant reply. He frankly admitted that the object of the Coercion Bill which was being discussed in the Commons, was to put a stop to the combinations of the tenants, and therefore he said he thought it not unreasonable also to propose "that some check should be put on the action of those landlords who exasperate the tenants, and keep these combinations alive." So Lord Salisbury spoke of the two Bills, the Coercion Bill and the Land Law Bill, as "sister Bills complementary to each other," for without a measure for preventing the new powers that were given in the Coercion Bill from being used for the purpose of unreasonable evictions, there was no probability that the people of this country would let that Bill be passed. The Land Law Bill was, in fact, intended to smooth the way of the Crimes Bill, and Lord Salisbury said that if it was defeated in either House, the Government would conclude that they had not the confidence of Parliament. After this assurance, the Lords read the Bill a second time without a division.

While the House of Lords was discussing this first draft of a Bill which had as many shapes as Proteus rising from the sea, the House of Commons was occupied with Mr. Goschen's first Budget. He had told a City audience that it would be a humdrum Budget, and it was, in fact, made out of rather unpromising materials. The financial year which ended on the 31st of March showed an excess of revenue over expenditure of £776,000. The estimate for the new financial year was for an income on the basis of the existing taxation of £91,155,000. The estimated expenditure for the year was £90,180,000, leaving a



surplus of £975,000. He had therefore nothing to do but to let well alone. But Mr. Goschen was ambitious of making a big Budget. He proposed to increase the Revenue by £100,000 by a transfer duty of 10s. per cent. on Debenture Stocks, thus putting such stocks on the level of Ordinary and Preference shares. Existing Joint Stock Companies were to have the option of commuting all transfer duties on their shares, by an annual payment of a shilling per cent. on their capital. He further proposed to reduce the expenditure by sacrificing Sir Stafford Northcote's Sinking Fund, and reducing the charge for debt, which Sir Stafford Northcote had left at £28,000,000, to £26,000,000. The actual reduction in the charge for the current year would be £1,704,000. The excess of anticipated income over anticipated expenditure thus became £2,779,000. Having thus manufactured a surplus, Mr. Goschen proceeded to distribute it. He reduced the income-tax from eightpence to sevenpence, which disposed of £1,560,000, gave local authorities the whole of the carriage tax, and Ireland, which had no carriage tax, an equivalent grant of £50,000 in aid of arterial drainage, thus sacrificing £330,000. The tobacco duties were reduced from three shillings and sixpence to three shillings and fourpence, at a cost of £600,000, and another £20,000 was given up by remitting the duty on marine insurances in which the premium did not exceed half-a-crown, and substituting for it a duty of a penny on each policy. This loss was, however, allowed for in reckoning the £100,000 gain on the new stamps. The reductions were thus £2,490,000, leaving an estimated surplus on the year's Income and Expenditure of £289,000.

This Budget was subjected to severe criticism by Sir William Harcourt and by Lord Randolph Churchill. The value of Sir Stafford Northcote's Sinking Fund was, that the amount devoted to the repayment of debt went on increasing every year. If five millions were paid off in any year, the interest saved on that sum would go to increase the amount

paid off in the succeeding year. Sir William Harcourt protested against the abandonment, to the extent of two millions, of the provision for liquidating the debt, instead of effecting reductions in naval and military expenditure. He regretted the absence of any proposal for dealing with the gold coinage. Lord Randolph Churchill, whose zeal for retrenchment had not yet evaporated, blamed Mr. Goschen for speaking for nearly three hours and saying not a word about reducing the expenditure on the army and navy, which in four years had increased by six millions. Mr. Gladstone, speaking on the second night of the debate, said that so far from being a humdrum Budget, it was likely to be a memorable one. He objected to subventions in aid of rates, as taking off the burden from property and putting it to a large extent on labour. He thought the creation of the local loans debt was a mistake. The reduction of the income-tax by a penny was a wise step, but it should have been provided for by a reduction of the expenditure, not by taking a couple of millions from the Sinking Fund. The Budget, however, was accepted as a whole, and Mr. Goschen's financial proposals were carried out. He made a considerable change in the mode of treating local loans, by separating them from the debt and putting them in a budget by themselves. He apologized, too, for letting alone the death duties, which, he said, "require attention in the promptest manner."

In the interval between the two discussions on the Budget, the Government had received a fillip. At the Taunton election, on the 23rd of April, Mr. Percy Allsopp, the Conservative, defeated Mr. J. Harris Sanders, the Liberal candidate, by 1,426 to 890. The constituency is a small one, and it had not been contested in 1886. In 1885 the Conservative majority had been 383; and after the elections for Burnley and for the Ilkeston division of Derbyshire, this result at Taunton was regarded by the Government with great satisfaction. They got some further comfort out of the election for the St. Austell division of

Cornwall on the 18th of May. Mr. W. C. Borlase, a Liberal, who had been returned without opposition in 1886, retired from Parliament, and Mr. W. A. McArthur was returned in his place by 3,540 against 3,329 given to Mr. Brydges Willyams, his Dissentient Liberal competitor. As compared with 1885, when Mr. Borlase received 4,464 votes against 2,183 given to Mr. J. H. Johnstone, a Conservative, the majority was reduced from 2,281 to 211. These elections suggested to some timid Liberals that the Campaign of Calumny had begun to tell on the constituencies. On the day of the St. Austell election a special general meeting of the Eighty Club was held at the request of the Dissentient Liberals on the Committee, to consider the future position of the Club with respect to Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy. They proposed a resolution against the selection of the principal guest at the Club dinners "from one section only of the Liberal party." An amendment was moved leaving the selection of guests in the discretion of the Committee as before, and declaring it to be the duty of the Liberal party "to oppose the Crimes Bill now before Parliament, and to maintain and enforce the policy of Home Rule." This was carried by 143 to 55, and the Liberal Dissentient members held a meeting immediately afterwards, and determined to secede from the Club.

The next important political event outside Parliament was a great Conference of Eastern Counties Liberals, held by the National Liberal Federation, at Norwich, on the 25th of May. Mr. Schnadhorst presided, and said that the removal of the National Liberal Federation from Birmingham to London had brought it more into contact with the whole Liberal party throughout the country. He declared, amid enthusiastic cheers, that, for his part, he was not ashamed to enrol himself under Mr. Gladstone's leadership. He was prepared to stand by the Old Man, and he trusted the Old Man's life might be spared to achieve a real, permanent union between England and the sister country. Mr. John Morley spoke at night at a great



meeting in the Agricultural Hall. Speaking of the division in the Liberal party, he said the havoc made in its ranks by the Irish question was one of the most deplorable of the political phenomena of the century. Fellow-soldiers who had fought with them on behalf of great popular causes had drifted, and were drifting, widely apart. "Our Dissentient friends," he said, "are supporting, whenever they get the chance, the Tory candidate. I am bound to say that, so far as Liverpool, Burnley, Ilkeston, and Cornwall, are concerned, their efforts have not brought any prosperity to the candidate." They made proffers of conciliation, but it was conciliation at the point of the bayonet. After showing the need of Liberal union for carrying out legislation which was more and more needed every day, Mr. Morley said: "How can we, in the midst of the heat of protest against this disastrous and shameful policy of Coercion, hurry forward to reconcile ourselves with our Dissentient friends who are in the main responsible for fastening this policy on Ireland? How can we hurry forward to unite with statesmen who not only support the general policy of Coercion, but doggedly, defiantly and steadfastly go into the division lobby against any modifications of it, and in favour of making the Bill as drastic as they can." Commenting on this part of the speech, in a meeting at Birmingham in the next week, Mr. Chamberlain said it would be found hereafter to have marked a turning point in the controversy about reunion. Mr. Chamberlain failed to see that it was not what Mr. Morley said, but what the Dissentient Liberals had done in supporting the Coercion Bill, which marked the turning point. The final parting took place when the Liberals went into the lobby against a measure at which every Liberal instinct revolted, and the Dissentients went into the lobby with the Tories in its support. Mr. Morley only described the turning point, Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Hartington marked it for themselves.

The speech in which Mr. Chamberlain made this

reference itself marked a turning point. He made it at a Conference of the National Radical Union, over which he presided on the first of June, at Birmingham. The Union was a year old, but it had not done much. The Conference was opened by the reading of a letter from Lord Hartington, in which he said that the only object of the majority of the Liberal party seemed to be "to retain at any cost the support of the Irish Parliamentary party," but he gave no hint as to the Coercion Bill which was uppermost in all men's minds. Neither did Mr. Chamberlain. He spoke of the Union as having received an amount of support which he believed was unparalleled in the history of similar organizations, and said the time had now come to give its operations a greater development. He declared that the Round Table Conference would have been successful if the only people concerned in the agreement had been those who were present at its meetings. The Conference, however, had failed. Speaking of Sir George Trevelyan's return to the Liberal ranks, he said the conditions on which the Dissident Liberals insisted had been before the country since 1885, and he defied Sir George Trevelyan to point to a single word from Mr. Gladstone which showed his willingness to accept them. What then was the use of the Liberal Unionists deceiving themselves? Lord Rosebery had spoken of Sir George Trevelyan as "a repentant sinner." That was the spirit in which the Gladstonian converts were disposed to welcome their old colleagues back again. Then Mr. Chamberlain turned to Mr. John Morley's speech, and deduced from it the conclusion that it was not the Irish question alone that now divided them. That, he said, might have been settled if they had been met in the spirit which animated their own advances. But "I am now," he added, "reluctantly forced to the conclusion that there is no desire on the part of the Gladstonian Liberals for reunion, and that the cleavage is irreparable." The conclusion was a just one; but there was not a hint in Mr. Chamberlain's speech as to

what had made the cleavage irreparable. Nor was there a hint in a letter from Mr. Bright which was read at a meeting in the evening. Not one of them seemed to see that in supporting an odious Coercion Bill, a Coercion Bill under which, as Mr. Morley had said at Norwich, Mr. Dillon might find himself imprisoned for six months with hard labour, they were cutting themselves adrift from the whole course and tendency of the Liberal party. Mr. Chamberlain had his consolation, however, for the irreparable cleavage. "We shall be taunted, I suppose, with an alliance with the Tories. At least, our allies will be English gentlemen, and not the subsidized agents of a foreign conspiracy. I look beyond mere party considerations. The Government may be Tory, but if its measures are Liberal, I am prepared to discuss them on their merits, and without regard to past controversies." So said Mr. Chamberlain as he and his friends, having dropped some natural tears but wiped them soon, "Through Eden took their solitary way."

On the day before this speech was made, Mr. Gladstone had told the world once more what the feeling of the Liberals was about Mr. Balfour's Bill. Speaking to a vast crowd of visitors who had used a Whitsuntide holiday to make an excursion to Hawarden, Mr. Gladstone said, "It is pretended, gentlemen, that we are legislating against crime. Be it known to you that there is less crime in Ireland per million of population than there is in England or in Scotland, and the Bill which pretends to legislate against crime, but which really legislates against measures similar to those legally adopted by Trade Unions in England, that Bill which legislates against combination and not against crime, or rather, which legislates against combination while professing to legislate against crime, that Bill is itself a crime." It was this moral revolt at a policy which multitudes of right-feeling, tender-hearted people regarded as wicked, which the Liberal Dissentients failed to understand. Mr. Gladstone put himself at the head of this



movement of the people's conscience, as he had done in the agitation of 1876, and with the same results.

On the second of June, a delightful summer morning, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone set out on a journey to South Wales. Before they started, a deputation from Nottingham presented them with some choice specimens of the local manufactures. Mr. Gladstone in reply expressed the hope that Mr. Arnold Morley and Mr. Broadhurst might long continue to represent the divisions for which they sat. On the way to Saltney station, five miles from Hawarden, the country people came out to wish them "God speed." At the station itself there were great crowds who had elaborately decorated it for the occasion. At Wrexham, where the first stoppage took place, an address was presented from the Wrexham, Bala and Corwen Liberal Association, and Mr. Gladstone made a brief address to an admiring crowd. At Ruabon the colliers had left off work, and the station was filled by vast multitudes who wanted a word, but the train went slowly through without stopping, only allowing Mr. Gladstone to bow to the people. At Oswestry the crowds insisted on a speech and got a brief address. At Newtown a special platform had been erected, and Mr. Gladstone spoke from it to an audience of several thousand. At Llanidloes he spoke again; at Rhayader a dais had been placed on the station platform from which he gave another address. So the progress was continued, till Mr. Gladstone had to say that he could speak no more. At Cefn Junction the people had expected him to leave the train and drive by road through Dowlais to Merthyr. Heavy rain had come on but all the roads were crowded, and it was reckoned that 50,000 people had gathered in the streets of Dowlais. Mr. Gladstone, however, had to go through by the train to Merthyr, where dense masses lined the station, and afternoon tea was ready in a cleared space on the platform. The party could not leave the carriage, and a group of young ladies took the refreshment to them with

heaps of bouquets. The crowd sang "Land of my Fathers," and when Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone drank their health, burst into singing "For he is a jolly good fellow." At Neath there were similar crowds. At Landore Junction the workmen fired salutes and lined the railway to cheer for Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone as the train passed by. At Swansea the station was kept for a select company of four hundred, but there were great crowds in the streets outside, and "Land of my Fathers" was sung again with magnificent effect. The drive through the cheering multitudes in Swansea streets and out into the country to Singleton Abbey, finished up one of the most striking popular welcomes that even Mr. Gladstone had ever received.

This great popular reception was followed up on Saturday by still more striking demonstrations. South Wales gave itself a general holiday, and all the Liberal Associations of the Principality sent large deputations to present addresses to Mr. Gladstone at Sir Hussey Vivian's house. Sixty special trains brought these visitors into Swansea, where a vast procession was formed which marched out to Singleton Abbey with bands and banners. A *daïs* had been erected in front of the house, on which Mr. Gladstone sat with the Liberal members for the district and other prominent Liberals, with some four hundred ladies on the banks and grassy slopes around. The space in front of the house thus formed an amphitheatre over the arena of which the deputations passed. As each group arrived, the president and secretaries were presented to Mr. Gladstone by Mr. Abraham, M.P., handed in their address and fell back while the procession passed on. Thus for four hours and a quarter a continuous stream of people marched past the *daïs*, cheering and singing as they went, content with the glimpse they had caught of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, or the bow they had received from them. The leaders then gathered together in a crowd of three or four thousand in front of the house, and Mr. Gladstone made a speech nearly an hour in length. After speaking of

the wonderful and affecting sight presented by the magnificent procession which had just passed, he said he could not express the satisfaction with which he observed that in Protestant Wales—perhaps the most Protestant country in the whole world—there was a determination to do justice, and nothing less than the fullest justice, to Roman Catholic Ireland. This was because Protestant Wales had learned the Christian lesson to do to others as we would they should do to us. It was a serious question for them whether Wales was a nationality or not. “I hold in my hand,” said Mr. Gladstone, “one of your addresses in which it is said, and it is said in many of them, ‘belonging as we do to a separate’—that is a distinct—‘nationality.’ Now that does not mean disunion from England, it means closer union with England. It is a recognition of all the distinctive qualities of the separate parts of great countries and empires, which constitutes the true basis of union, and to attempt to centralize them by destroying those local peculiarities is the shallowest philosophy, and the worst possible of all practical blunders.” Speaking of disestablishment for Wales, he said that it should be decided by the views and feelings of the Welsh people. Passing on to Ireland he showed that the object of the Coercion Bill was to put down the unions of the tenants, which were similar to the Trade Unions of England, Wales and Scotland.

The most important speech, however, was at a dinner given by Sir Hussey Vivian in the evening to eighty leading Liberals of the district. In replying to the toast of his health, Mr. Gladstone passed the whole question of Home Rule for Ireland under review, and made some new suggestions for its settlement. He began by pointing out that it was a Conservative proposal, and incidentally showed that the course Lord Hartington had taken had tended, more than anything that had happened for a long series of years, to the extinction of Moderate Liberalism. The Liberal opposition to Home Rule, tended to drive the Liberal party into a position which would accentuate its more pronounced



opinions and throw the less pronounced views into the shade. After throwing out a suggestion of further Conference with Lord Hartington, Mr. Gladstone discussed the possible changes in the Home Rule measure. He went through the five points laid down in his speech on the 14th of April, 1886, of which three were not in controversy, for on one of the three—that there should be safeguards for minorities—he said “That had reference to the jealousies which prevailed in Ulster, and we again and again declared that if there is a desire—a well-considered desire—on the part of the Protestant population of Ulster capable of being dealt with separately, we were perfectly agreed to consider any plan for that purpose.” “The only two that remain,” he said, “are, on the side of Great Britain, the unity of the Empire and the supremacy of Parliament, and on the side of Ireland, that the measure of Home Rule—that is, the management of strictly Irish affairs by strictly Irish authority—shall be real and effective, and shall be accepted as real and effective by the Irish nation.” Proceeding then to discuss the question of the retention of the Irish members at Westminster, he suggested that for a while the Irish representation should be left as it is, and that in the case of the Home Rule Bill they should follow the precedents of the Bank Act, and the East India Act, and “legislate for a certain number of years so as to require that at their termination the matter should be again mentioned within the walls of the House.” He was ready to accept and promote a Home Rule scheme which Ireland would receive, even though it adjourned the question of Irish representation, and though it might involve some plan which did not commend itself to him as absolutely the best.

This further olive branch was rejected. The Dissident Liberals had now become too much alienated in feeling for any overtures of peace to be of use. In a leading article on Mr. Gladstone's speech *The Times* exactly described the position of the Dissidents in the matter. This question

of the extent and powers of local government in Ireland had, said *The Times*, ceased to be the central point in the controversy. "The Liberals who refuse to follow Mr. Gladstone are no longer unable merely to accept the measures introduced by him to purchase the Parliamentary support of Mr. Parnell. They are more deeply disgusted by the later developments of that ill-omened bargain, by the encouragement of obstruction, by the palliation of crime, by the pretence that an alliance with the avowed enemies of English rule, of property, and of law, is consistent with the traditions of constitutional Liberalism." That this was the prejudiced and irreconcilable attitude of the Dissident Liberals, their reception of Mr. Gladstone's suggestions proved. Mr. Chamberlain, speaking at the Liberal Union meeting at Willis's Rooms on the 14th of June, spoke of strained relations between the Liberals and their Irish allies and said he had not abandoned the hope that the bulk of the party would before long return to the fold—meaning the fold of which Lord Hartington and he were the shepherds. Nothing, he said, held the Liberals together but "the temporary and exceptional influence of a great personality." Lord Hartington speaking in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, said that in the course of the conflict new differences had arisen which had undoubtedly increased the difficulty of immediate reconciliation or reunion. The Tory wedge of Coercion, driven home by the Campaign of Calumny, had made the severance of feeling too deep and wide for concessions on either side to bring them together again.

It is refreshing to turn for a moment from this distressing controversy to some happier aspects of public affairs. The Colonial Conference, which met in London on the 4th of April, was universally felt to be as appropriate to the Queen's Jubilee year as the Crimes Bill and the Campaign of Calumny were out of place. The thirty-seven British Colonies were represented, and many subjects of Imperial interest were discussed. On the 4th of May the members

of the Conference went down to Windsor and presented a congratulatory Address to the Queen on her approaching Jubilee. "Your Majesty," said the Address, "has witnessed the number of your Colonial subjects of European descent increase from under two millions to nine millions, and of Asiatic race in your Indian Empire from 96 millions to 294 millions, and of other peoples in your colonies and dependencies from two millions to seven millions. The area now governed by your Majesty in India is 1,380,000 square miles, and in your Colonies 7,000,000 square miles. The increase of trade, of shipping and of revenue, has been in proportion to that of population; and no one in your wide dominions is subject to any other sway than that of even and impartial law." This last statement was true only for the moment, and every thoughtful man who read it on the next morning in the papers, thought of the Bill for making Mr. Balfour an Irish dictator which was then being forced through the House of Commons. This Crimes Bill, and the agitation connected with it, spoiled the popular effect of this striking gathering of Colonial representatives. Nobody had time to take much note of their discussions, and their resolutions came to but little. They advised that an addition should be made to the Queen's title, so that she should be described as "Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the Colonies and Dependencies thereof." Mr. W. H. Smith said in answer to questions in Parliament, that the matter had been referred to the Colonial Governors, and there it stood. The presence of the Colonial representatives gave interest to the scheme, adopted with the sanction of the Prince of Wales, for the Government of the Imperial Institute by which forty-five members to represent the British Isles, thirty to represent the Colonies, fifteen to represent the Indian Empire, and ten nominated by the Queen, made up a General Council of a hundred, to be increased by fifty afterwards.

The celebration of the Queen's Jubilee scarcely belongs to the political history of the times at all. It came like a



gleam of happy sunshine amid the gloom and chill of the political season. A Bill was passed to give leave to the Duke of Connaught to come home from India to be present at the celebration. The Speaker and four hundred members of the House of Commons went in State to St. Margaret's Church on the 22nd of May to hear a sermon by the Bishop of Ripon, who was afterwards thanked by a resolution of the House. There was a ball on the 15th of June at the Reform Club, and there were municipal festivities all through the month. The central celebration was in Westminster Abbey, whither on the longest day the Queen went in State to a Thanksgiving Service. The weather was perfect, and the day was kept as a great national holiday. The procession passed through some miles of richly-decorated streets, lined everywhere with delighted multitudes, who were profoundly impressed with the greatness of the occasion, and the magnificence of the spectacle. As the Queen's carriage passed along, surrounded by a group of royal princes on horseback, the popular reception was greater and more enthusiastic than even Queen Victoria, in her happiest days, had ever seen before. The Abbey itself was crowded by the most splendid assemblage of distinguished persons that had ever been brought together in England. The members of both Houses of Parliament, the representatives of foreign nations, groups of princes from the Indian Empire and the friendly countries in the East, European sovereigns and princes, great generals and naval commanders, representatives of the Civil Services and of all the professions, with multitudes of ladies, formed a most brilliant sight. When the Queen arrived, all stood up to give her a silent welcome. As a grand procession led her up the nave amid splendid music, many of the people present were deeply moved. Then followed a solemn service of thanksgiving and prayer, an hour in length, and when it was over, the Queen received the congratulations and homage of the royal family to which she made affectionate response. Then the Lord Chamberlain

led her away to the West door, the princes going in front and the princesses following, the Queen bowing to each of the Indian princes as she passed ; and returning to the Palace by way of Whitehall and Pall Mall amid every sign of universal satisfaction and enjoyment.

A Naval Brigade review in the afternoon, and a grand banquet and reception at night, made up the Queen's day. But perhaps the most striking of all the Jubilee festivities, was that to which the Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales and some of the Royal visitors went on the next afternoon. Mr. Edward Lawson, proprietor of *The Daily Telegraph*, conceived the happy thought of giving a treat to the children from the elementary schools of London in Hyde Park. More than 27,000 children were assembled in the Park, were fed, amused, allowed to see the Queen, and sent home with a happy recollection of the Jubilee to retain all their lives. The other festivities do not belong to this history. The Jubilee honours were not given with a lavish hand. Three Conservative members of the House of Commons and one Dissident Liberal member, were made peers, and on the whole there was a decided political bias in Lord Salisbury's choice of the recipients of the Queen's favour. On the 24th of June, the Queen addressed a letter to the people through the Home Secretary, thanking them for their enthusiastic reception. "It has shown," she said, "that the labour and anxiety of fifty long years, twenty-two of which I spent in unclouded happiness shared and cheered by my beloved husband, while an equal number were full of sorrows and trials, borne without his sheltering arm and wise help, have been appreciated by my people. This feeling and the sense of duty towards my dear country and subjects, who are so inseparably bound up with my life, will encourage me in my task, often a very difficult and arduous one, during the remainder of my life." A volunteer review at Buckingham Palace, the laying of the foundation stone of the Imperial Institute, a magnificent review at Aldershot, and last of all

a grand naval review and spectacle at Spithead, were the chief celebrations by which the Jubilee festivities were brought to a close in July.

During the Jubilee celebrations, the House of Commons was in Committee on the Coal Mines Regulation Bill. Mr. Broadhurst had introduced a similar measure in 1886, which the dissolution stopped. The Bill of 1887 was somewhat wider than that of the previous year, and Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Burt lent Mr. Matthews very efficient aid in passing it. On Mr. Burt's motion, the age at which boys can be employed in mines was raised from ten to twelve; and on Mr. J. Ellis's amendment, the same limitation was applied to girls employed at the pit-brow. The measure was regarded by Mr. Burt and Mr. W. Abraham as on the whole a satisfactory one, and an advance on the Bill of the preceding year. The House of Commons gave itself a little excitement by calling Reginald Bidmead to the bar on the 23rd of June, when he was reprimanded by the Speaker for the fabrication of signatures to petitions with respect to the London Coal and Wine dues. There were discussions, too, on the new Jubilee coins, to which everybody objected, and which at length had to be superseded by a new issue. On the 11th of July Mr. W. H. Smith announced that an Agricultural Committee of the Privy Council had been appointed, of which the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster would be vice-President. This was the first step towards the appointment of a Minister of Agriculture.

One of the excitements of the Session was the defeat of the Government in a division on a motion of adjournment made by Mr. Atherley Jones on the 5th of July. Miss Cass, a young dressmaker, had been arrested by a constable named Endacott in Regent Street, on a charge of accosting gentlemen with an immoral intention. He took her off to prison, and next day swore before Mr. Newton, the magistrate at Marlborough Street, that he had watched her and knew her as a woman of bad reputation. Miss Cass



brought her employer to testify to her good character, but Mr. Newton believed the policeman, and dismissed Miss Cass with a reprimand. Miss Cass and her friends appealed to the public, and strong feeling was excited. Questioned on the subject in the House of Commons, Mr. Matthews fell back upon the argument which the Government was applying to the Irish members. There were the tribunals, offering both a civil and a criminal remedy, let Miss Cass appeal to them. This reply was held to be sufficient for libelled Irishmen, but it was not enough for a young Englishwoman, and as Mr. Matthews was obdurate, Mr. Atherley Jones, who was supported by nearly the whole of the Opposition, moved the adjournment to discuss the case. Mr. Matthews repeated his refusal to institute an inquiry, but Mr. Chamberlain spoke strongly of Mr. Newton's course, said he had acted rudely and something more, and urged that he should be called on to explain his conduct. Mr. Caine said that no more scandalous and disgraceful episode in the history of the police in London had ever been brought before the House. He charged the police with levying blackmail all over the metropolis on women at whose wretched trade they winked. Mr. Jacob Bright and Mr. Henry Fowler urged inquiry, and Mr. W. H. Smith said that if the statements of Miss Cass and her friends were verified, the Government would see that justice was done. But these explanations were not enough, and Mr. Atherley Jones took a division in which the Government was defeated by a majority of five. On the next day Mr. W. H. Smith granted the inquiry, which was afterwards held by Sir Charles Warren with a legal assessor. The result was to vindicate Miss Cass's character; and it was held that both magistrate and policeman had acted with precipitancy. The policeman Endacott was put on his trial for perjury, but it was found that he was honestly mistaken and he was acquitted.

There were increasing signs outside the House of Commons of the reaction in favour of Home Rule which the

Coercion Bill had produced. The death of Lord Winchilsea removed his son, Mr. Finch Hatton, from the House of Commons and made a vacancy in the representation of the Spalding division of Lincolnshire, for which he had sat in the Tory interest from 1885. At the general election in that year he had been returned by a majority over Mr. Halley Stewart of 78, having polled 4,658 to Mr. Stewart's 4,580. In the next year both candidates stood again, and on a smaller poll Mr. Finch Hatton's majority was increased to 288. Mr. Halley Stewart was the Liberal candidate for the third time, and had for his Conservative opponent Admiral Sir G. Tryon. The election was fought almost entirely on the question of Home Rule versus Coercion. On the one side the constituency was deluged with copies of "Parnellism and Crime," and on the other it was appealed to by a large number of Liberal and Irish Nationalist members. Sir George Trevelyan wrote a letter in which he gave a history of the Round Table Conference, and expressed his belief that since Mr. Gladstone's speech at Swansea there was not the shadow of an excuse for any one who called himself a Liberal to support a Tory candidate. The ballot took place on the first of July, and Mr. Halley Stewart was returned by 5,110 against 4,303, a Liberal majority of 747. This decisive victory raised the spirits of the Liberal party and widened the breach between the main body of the party and the revolting wing. Mr. Gladstone, speaking at a dinner at Sir Joseph Pease's on the evening after the declaration of the poll, said: "We are told the Liberal party is in two sections. How many sections was the Liberal party in at Spalding?" On the eighth of July there was an election in North Paddington. There had been a hitch in the Liberal candidature, and Mr. Edmund Routledge came forward on the Liberal side within a week of the poll. Mr. John Aird, the Conservative candidate, was returned by 2,230 votes to 1,812—a Tory majority of 418 in a constituency which had given the Conservatives majorities of 685 in 1885 and 911 in 1886.

On the next day a Liberal victory was won at Coventry. Mr. H. W. Eaton, who had been returned by Tory majorities of 239 in 1885 and 405 in 1886, had been made a Jubilee peer, and his son Colonel Eaton came forward to take his place. Mr. W. H. Ballantine, the defeated Liberal candidate in 1886, came forward again, and won the seat by 4,229 to 4,213, a Liberal majority of sixteen. On the 18th of July there was an election in the Basingstoke division of Hampshire to fill the place of Mr. Sclater Booth, who had been made a peer. Mr. Richard Eve was the Liberal candidate, and though he was defeated he reduced the Tory majority from 1,579 to 732. There was a similar result on the same day at Brixton, where a Tory seat had been vacated by the appointment of Mr. Baggallay as a metropolitan magistrate. Lord Carmarthen was the Tory candidate, and Mr. James Hill made a gallant struggle for the Liberals and reduced the Tory majority by 676. At an election for the University of Dublin on the 12th of July Mr. Serjeant Madden was returned by a large majority. On the 19th of July there was an election in the Hornsey division of Middlesex, where the Tories increased their majority from 1,320 to 1,988; and ten days later, at an election in the Forest of Dean to fill the place of the deceased member Mr. Blake, who had been returned in 1886 by a majority of 1,407, Mr. B. Samuelson was returned by a majority of 1,550—an increase of 143, but more than a thousand below the poll of 1885. On the 27th of July Mr. T. C. Baring was returned without opposition for the City of London in place of Mr. J. G. Hubbard, who had been made a peer.

The most interesting by-election of the summer was, however, that which followed the resignation of Mr. Edward Russell, whose majority in the Bridgeton division of Glasgow was 121 in 1885 and 797 in 1886. Sir George Trevelyan having been adopted as the Liberal candidate, the Dissident Liberals and their Tory allies determined if possible to prevent his election. They put forward Mr.



Evelyn Ashley as a Dissident Liberal, and Mr. Ashley, with the aid of a letter from Mr. Chamberlain, made hostile use of the failure of the Round Table Conference. Mr. Bright and Lord Hartington both wrote letters against Sir George Trevelyan and in favour of his opponent, but did not influence the voting. The public had ceased to care about Dissident Liberals who supported Coercion, and Mr. Evelyn Ashley polled fewer than Mr. Russell's Tory opponents in the two previous elections, while Sir George Trevelyan largely increased the Liberal poll and was returned by a majority of 1,401. While this election was going on, the death of Mr. Robert Verdin, the Dissident Liberal who had defeated Mr. Brunner in the Northwich division of Cheshire in 1886 by a majority of 458—4,416 to 3,958—created another vacancy. Mr. Brunner, who had been returned against a Conservative in 1885, came forward again, and Lord Henry Grosvenor opposed him as a Dissident Liberal. The ballot took place on the 18th of August. Mr. Brunner polled more than he had got in 1885, and won the seat by 5,112 to 3,983, thus turning a Liberal minority of 458 into a majority of 1,129. There were two other by-elections in the year. In the Ramsey division of Huntingdonshire the Liberals attacked a Tory seat which had not been contested in 1886, and somewhat reduced the Tory majority of 1885; in December they did the same in the Dulwich division of Camberwell.

The Irish Land Bill had been in Committee in the House of Lords on the 16th and 17th of May, and again, after the Whitsuntide holidays, on the 13th of June. It had been transformed between the second reading and the Committee; and in Committee it was transformed again. It was reported on the first of July, when Lord Spencer expressed his regret that no provision had been included for dealing with the judicial rents, which the fall in prices had made too high and which landlords refused to reduce. Had such a provision been made it would have met and put out of court the Plan of Campaign. Lord Cowper,

the Chairman of the Royal Commission, said nobody liked the Bill, but they let it pass for fear of embarrassing the Government. It was read a third time on the fourth of July, and introduced into the Commons on the same day. Mr. Balfour moved the second reading on the 11th of July, and said that the Government were strongly opposed to any meddling with judicial rents. For stopping evictions they depended on the bankruptcy clauses. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman moved an amendment which insisted that the recommendations of the Royal Commission should be carried out, by the inclusion of all leaseholders in the Land Act of 1881, and by "affording such means for the revision of the judicial rents under that Act as will meet the exigencies created by the heavy fall in agricultural values." As to the eviction and bankruptcy clauses, he contended that so far from stopping evictions the Bill would increase them. At present a large number of evictions were restrained because the landlord did not like the odium and scandal of the process, now he would simply transform the tenant partner into a caretaker and servant by the delivery of a legal document. Mr. Chamberlain supported the second reading, but urged that some points needed further consideration. Many landlords had made abatements of rent because of the fall in prices—Why should not the tenants of landlords who had refused any abatement be entitled to go to the Court and ask for it? Some landlords had refused, because the heavy charges on their estates left them in desperate straits themselves—Why should not their case be considered? He further urged that all leaseholders should be included. The debate lasted two nights, and the Bill was read a second time without a division.

After the second reading difficulties began. The Dissident Liberals met at Devonshire House and drew up some amendments, the substance of which was embodied in Mr. Chamberlain's suggestions. Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain pressed these amendments on the Government, and a party in the Cabinet were in favour of accept-

ing them. But the revision of the judicial rents, which their Royal Commission had recommended, was the point on which the chief members of the Cabinet had most firmly put down their foot. Lord Salisbury had declared that it would not be honest in the first place, and would be exceedingly inexpedient in the second place. All through the various Irish debates Mr. Balfour had taunted the Liberals by telling them that having passed in 1881 a great settlement which was to last fifteen years, they were now for reopening it again at the end of less than six years. So late as Saturday, the 16th of July, Mr. Goschen, speaking to a Tory meeting at the Alexandra Palace, said: "We have refused a general revision of judicial rents as has been and is now being asked by the Gladstonian and Parnellite party. We have refused that the rents all over Ireland should again be opened up, and our contention is that a periodic or general revision of rents is incompatible with that permanency which should characterize purchase. If you are continually to revise rents, purchase is gone; it becomes impossible; and therefore we have contended against the revision of rents, because it seemed to us to encourage the idea of rents falling with every falling price, which would be fatal to the adoption of every principle of purchase." How could they now turn round on all these emphatic declarations, and consent to do the very thing they had thus spoken of as dishonest, as inconsistent with the policy of Land Purchase and as dangerously reopening a great Parliamentary settlement? The Irish Land Bill, however, was the *quid pro quo* to the Liberal Dissentients for their support of the Coercion Bill, and there was danger that the Government might be defeated if concessions were refused. So Lord Salisbury once more called his party round him, and at a meeting at the Carlton Club on the 19th of July told them they must yield. The clause relating to leaseholders must be amended, so as to include all but perpetuity leaseholders. The equity jurisdiction clauses must be amended, and the bankruptcy



clauses dropped. The real crux of the question, however, was the revision of judicial rents. In this matter the Government could not dictate their own terms, and if they were defeated Mr. Gladstone would come in and dissolve Parliament. There was nothing to be done then, but to meet the views of their Liberal supporters by inserting in the Bill a provision empowering the Land Commissioners to make a tentative reduction of judicial rents, the operation of the clause to be limited to two years. The proposal was very distasteful to the assembled Tories, and Lord Kilmorey contrasted it with Mr. Goschen's speech at the Alexandra Palace, and said they must not pay too extravagantly for the support of their Liberal friends. Mr. Chaplin spoke strongly against the revision of judicial rents, but gave way to other considerations. Like Julia, when

A little still she strove, and much repented,  
And whispering "I will ne'er consent," consented,

he consented, with a protest against the departure from Conservative principles the concession involved. Mr. Goschen, whose presence at the Carlton was taken as the material guarantee of the perpetuity of the Coalition, explained that the abatement of fifteen or twenty per cent. in judicial rents for two years was not in the nature of the general revision of judicial rents against which they had protested, and Sir John Mowbray came forward to declare that the paramount duty of the party was to preserve the Union. To this paramount duty of keeping in office and preventing the return of Mr. Gladstone to power the meeting tacitly resolved to be faithful, even at the cost of sacrificing its own consistency and the judicial rents.

The House of Commons went into Committee on the Bill on the 25th of July, and on the 3rd of August—the day after Sir George Trevelyan's victory at Glasgow—the Bill passed through Committee. It passed the other stages before the end of the first week in August. The Government had yielded all the points which had been suggested

in Mr. Campbell-Bannerman's amendment, but had persisted in refusing to include arrears in the revision, though they permitted the County Court Judge to spread the payment over a longer time. Tenants were therefore forced to pay arrears of the very rents which Parliament declared to be unjust. The Lords kicked at the concessions, and modified one or two of them. The chief change they made, however, was—that in the revision of judicial rents, the adjustment was to be made according to the rise and fall of agricultural prices; and the Government stood by the amendment, obliging the Commons to accept it, which they did by 206 to 164. Thus the chief relief given to the tenant was made illusory. The very evil Lord Milltown had pointed out was realized, and in a bad season, when crops were small and poor and prices rose in consequence, the rents were actually raised when the tenants were in distress. A "produce rent" can only be a fair rent, when the quantity and quality of the produce as well as its price are taken into account. The Irish policy of the Coalition was, however, partly carried out by this Act. The Dissident Liberals had aided in giving the landlords a strong Coercion Act, and had satisfied their own consciences, but not the conscience of the country, by the reflection that side by side with it they had secured some amelioration in the lot of the tenants. At a banquet to Lord Hartington given by the Liberal supporters of the Government in the House of Commons, and over which Mr. Bright presided, Lord Hartington apologized for the Crimes Bill, by asking whether such proceedings as those of the Plan of Campaign ought to be tolerated in any civilized state. As to the Land Act he said he had hoped it would not have been needful to adopt a principle "so full of risk and danger" as the revision of judicial rents, but the Government had been forced to it. "Proposals and suggestions have been made for a closer union of the Unionist party," said Lord Hartington, "and no doubt such a union would be the most perfect form of its

organization." But the time had not yet come, though progress was being made, but when Parliament reassembled after the recess, "we, the leaders of the Unionist party," he said, "will be able to place before the country a policy of reform and progress, which shall at the same time tend to consolidate the union of the Unionist party, which will tend to secure and establish the benefits of the Union, and confer upon our country benefits for which it has long been waiting, and for which, but for some policy of this kind, it seems to me likely to have long to wait."

The second Session of the Coalition Parliament had thus been given up almost entirely to Irish questions. There was a further Irish debate on the 25th and 26th of August on a motion of Mr. Gladstone's against the Proclamation of the National League. The League was proclaimed on the 19th of August, and Mr. Chamberlain, in a speech at Birmingham on the 22nd, made a not very vigorous protest against this violent course. "There is no emergency in Ireland," said Mr. Chamberlain. "The country is conspicuously free from serious crime." But he did not carry any large number of the Dissident Liberals with him. The country might be conspicuously free from crime, but it was not Crime but Combination against which the Coercion Bill was directed. So in the division on the 26th of August Mr. Gladstone's resolution was defeated by 272 to 195, a ministerial majority of 77. In this division 47 Dissident Liberals voted with the Government, Mr. Bright and Lord Hartington being among them; 17 were absent unpaired, and Mr. J. Chamberlain, Mr. R. Chamberlain, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. B. Hingley, Mr. W. Kenrick, and Mr. J. Powell-Williams voted with Mr. Gladstone; as did Mr. T. R. Buchanan, Mr. Winterbottom, and Sir Hussey Vivian. Only eight Liberals and two Nationalists were absent unpaired.

One important measure which had been mentioned in the Queen's Speech was introduced very late in what Mr. Chamberlain described as "a very tedious and very



laborious Session." Quickened into active sympathy with the agricultural labourers by the Spalding election, Mr. Ritchie brought in an Allotments Bill in a hurry on the 18th of July, and got it read a second time on the eleventh of August. It was a Bill for giving the Sanitary Authority—be it Town Council, Local Board, or Board of Guardians—power to buy or rent land and let it in allotments. Six electors or ratepayers memorializing the Authority might set it in motion, and if land could not be got at a reasonable price or rent, the Sanitary Authority was to apply to the County Authority—then the Court of Quarter Sessions—to make a Provisional Order empowering the local authority to put in force the Lands Clauses Act of 1845, and to promote a Bill in Parliament to give it compulsory power. To this cumbrous and impossible process the Government adhered. An amendment by Mr. Cobb, substituting for the Provisional Order a certificate of the Local Government Board, which would not require any application to Parliament, was defeated by 144 against 68. On the same day, the 25th of August, two amendments of Mr. Channing's were defeated, one providing that only a fair price should be paid for the land, the other allowing allotments to be more than a single acre in size. For this last amendment the votes were 88 against 110. The Bill was read a third time on the fifth of September, it passed speedily through the Lords; and Parliament rose on the 16th.

The Queen's Speech at the close of the Session told of the satisfactory conclusion of the protracted negotiations with Russia for fixing the northern frontier of Afghanistan; the treaty with China in reference to its relations with Burmah; the pacification of Burmah; and the Treaty with the Sultan "under which it would be possible for me to undertake the withdrawal of my troops from Egypt at a fixed date. It has, however, not been ratified by the Sultan, and the course of action imposed on me by my obligations to the Ruler and people of Egypt remain

unchanged." The agreement with the President for a Joint Commission on the North American Fisheries, and a congratulatory reference to "the first Conference of the representatives of my Colonies that has ever been held in this capital," concluded the Foreign portion of the Speech. The domestic part began with the expression of a hope that trade was reviving and of deep grief at the continued depression in agriculture. Then the Irish legislation was glanced at, with a hint that Ireland had blocked the way of "many important measures affecting other parts of the United Kingdom." The Allotments Act, the Mines Act, the Trade Marks Act, and the Scotch Acts were briefly mentioned, and the Speech concluded with a grateful reference to the Jubilee, and a wish that the Queen "may be spared to continue to reign over a loving, faithful, and united people." The members of the House of Commons who listened to the Speech had heard a letter read by the Speaker just before, in which a resident magistrate informed him that William O'Brien, Esquire, a member of the House of Commons, had been brought before him on a warrant under the Coercion Act, charged with inciting persons to resist the sheriff and his officers, that he had been committed for trial, "and that he is now in Cork County Prison." This was one of the conspicuous results of the Jubilee Session.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*"GOVERNMENT THAT DOES NOT FLINCH."*

THE Coercion Act became law on the 19th of July, and on the 21st Mr. Balfour went over to Dublin to make arrangements for putting it in force. On Friday the 22nd Lord Londonderry followed him, and on Saturday afternoon a meeting of the Privy Council was held, at which it was determined that eighteen counties should be put fully under the Act, and thirteen others, with the ten chief towns and cities, under some portions of it. Thus, the whole of Ireland, with the exception of Carlow and the rural parts of the county of Antrim, was brought under the full or the partial operation of the new law; and a couple of days later the two excepted counties were included. In the eighteen counties, therefore, trial by jury was abolished for most serious offences excepting murder, and any man might be brought before two resident magistrates on a charge of conspiring to induce a neighbour not to take a farm, and might be sentenced to six months' hard labour for giving advice. If the sentence should be only for a month's imprisonment, there would be no appeal. In the other counties trial by jury was abolished in cases of assault on the officers of the law, or of taking forcible possession of houses or lands. In the ten cities trial by jury was abolished for charges of assault on officers of the law. This prompt application of the principle of "Thorough" took everybody by surprise. In introducing the Bill, Mr. Balfour had described it as limited in space, but not in time, and all through the debates he had spoken



of it as intended to be very limited in its operation. On the 27th of June, in speaking on Mr. John Morley's proposal to limit the operation of the measure to three years, Mr. Balfour said: "These honourable gentlemen who are so sensitive lest an insult should be inflicted upon the law-abiding population of Ireland, are the very people who passed repressive measures applying to the whole of Ireland, while we only ask for a measure which shall apply where necessity appears to demand its application, and which will not apply where no such necessity exists." Later on in the same speech this assurance was repeated more emphatically. "We hope," said Mr. Balfour, "that the area of Ireland over which it will be necessary to use it will be but a small part of the country; we hope that for years together it may be possible to allow the Bill to remain quiescent." Mr. Balfour's "government that did not flinch" had to get power into its hands by not flinching from such assurances as these, for it was by these professions, together with the constant plea that none but murderers and moonlighters were aimed at, that the Bill was got through.

There had been no change in Ireland between the 27th of June and the 23rd of July to justify this change, or apparent change, of policy on the part of the Government. The official returns of agrarian crime for the quarter which ended on the 30th of June showed that, with the exception of threatening letters, the total number of offences in all Ireland was but 131; that in four counties there was no crime at all, in nine counties there had been but one crime in each; in three counties two crimes in each; and in each of four counties three crimes. The pretence that the Bill was intended to repress crime was at once flung away when it had become law, and Mr. Balfour told the House of Commons, on the 25th of July, that if in some of the proclaimed counties there was no crime there was intimidation. Being further questioned on the 26th, he said that the Government, in bringing the Act so universally into force, had not been guided merely by

statistics of agrarian outrage, or even by the number of persons boycotted or under police protection, but by the reports and opinions they had received from responsible officers as to the social condition of the various counties. This was not quite Lord Salisbury's view, for in his speech at the Mansion House on the tenth of August he said: "We had to deal with the case of a population who were no longer free, whose ordinary liberty was shackled by organized crime, and we have proposed the remedies that we thought necessary for that state of things. It has been reproached to us that we have sought for powers to repress political opinions differing from our own. We repudiate with indignation any such charge." As, however, there was no organized crime to repress, the great powers taken under the Act seemed at first to be useless. There was nobody to prosecute, nothing for the new despotism to exercise itself upon. People began to ask—Why all this machinery of repression, and nobody to repress? Sir William Harcourt, in a speech at Erith on the 11th of August, said: "The Government have got their Bill, and now they don't know what to do with it. They have got nothing and no one in Ireland on whom to exercise it. They are like a man who has made an elaborate torture-chamber, and who has got his rack and his pincers and his thumb-screws ready, but cannot find a victim upon whom to use them." By this time an outcry was already rising for the suppression of the National League under the sixth section of the Coercion Act. *The Times* published long articles on "The Working of the League," and day after day urged the Government to proclaim it, and make it unlawful. A meeting of landowners of county Clare which was held at Ennis on the 11th of August, passed a resolution declaring that they looked with dismay at the invertebrate policy of the Government in delaying the proclamation of the National League. But the Government had to consider not only the Irish landlords, but their English Liberal supporters, who were getting frightened at the flowing tide

of the by-elections. *The St. James's Gazette* inferred from the polls at these elections that a large part of the Liberal Unionist vote had gone back to Mr. Gladstone, and contended that the moral was that Conservatives should put forward Conservative candidates. On the 15th of August came the Northwich election, which still more weakened the position of the Dissident Liberals. Still the Government hesitated. They had got up a few prosecutions under the Crimes Act, but there was still an embarrassing absence of crime. It was known, too, that some of the officials in Dublin thought it would not be wise to proclaim the League. The Government however yielded to the pressure of their Tory supporters, and a special meeting of the Irish Privy Council was held in Dublin on the 19th of August, at which only Lord Ashbourne, Vice-Chancellor Chatterton, and the Lord Lieutenant were present, and the League was proclaimed "to be dangerous."

Under the sixth clause of the Crimes Act there were five grounds on which any association might be proclaimed "to be dangerous," three of them being associated with the commission or the encouragement of crime. The absence of crime was, however, so notorious that the Government could not plead either of these reasons for proclaiming the League, and the grounds set forth in the Proclamation were that "the said association in parts of Ireland promotes and incites to acts of violence and intimidation, and interferes with the administration of the law." The National League had been formed in 1882. It had for its object the restitution of the Irish Parliament, the creation of a peasant proprietary, the putting of uncultivated lands in the hands of local authorities, the protection of tenants against the imposition of rent on their own improvements, the creation of representative county boards, the extension of the franchise, the payment of members of Parliament, the provision by law of better dwellings for labourers, with allotments, the development of Irish industries, the encouragement of mechanics' institutes, working-men's clubs



and reading-rooms, and the general reforms advocated by the Liberal party in England. At the moment the League was proclaimed every branch was busy looking after the registration of Irish electors, as the Liberal and Conservative Associations do in England, and Mr. Balfour promised that this work should not be interfered with. The effect of the Proclamation was not to make the League unlawful, but to enable the Lord Lieutenant to suppress any branch or branches of it by further proclamation when he thought well to do so. At this further step the Government again hesitated. I have described in the last chapter the protest of Mr. Chamberlain and a small group of his friends against the proclamation of the League, and the vote they gave against the Government in the matter. Mr. Balfour was between two fires. The landlords, the Tory press, and the great bulk of the Tory party were crying shame on him for not suppressing the League at once, while some of the Dissident Liberals were urging him to carry out the promise made to them, and repeated up and down the country, that the powers given by the Coercion Act would be used, in Mr. Balfour's own words (see page 226), "not for putting down agitation, but for enforcing the law—the law which enables you to go home in some security that a midnight murderer will not invade your dwelling, possibly shoot you, and drag your wife and daughters out of bed." So the League was proclaimed to satisfy the one class ; and nothing more was done for a month, out of consideration for the other.

During this month of delay a serious riot occurred at Mitchelstown in county Cork. Some twelve hundred tenants on the estates of the Countess of Kingston were leaseholders, and were therefore excluded from the Land Act of 1881. They asked the agent to reduce their rents by twenty per cent., and as he peremptorily refused, they adopted the Plan of Campaign. Reductions were then offered to some of the tenants, but they insisted that all should have them. The Irish Land Bill, then before

Parliament, allowed these tenants to appeal to the Court for the reduction, but the agent was beforehand with the Legislature, and got out the writs early in August, intending to evict the tenants before the Bill became law. They resisted, and some of them fortified their houses. The Irish correspondent of *The Daily News*, writing on the 11th of August, said "all the houses where the bailiffs are expected have been fortified, and the estate presents the appearance of a place prepared for the reception of an invading army." The same Correspondent said that Captain Plunkett had been engaged all day "bringing pressure to bear on the would-be evictors to refrain from their cruel proceeding." Mr. William O'Brien and Mr. John Mandeville, gave the tenants advice and assistance, and meetings were held on the 9th and 10th of August, at which the need of acting together was successfully impressed upon them. For their speeches at these meetings Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Mandeville were summoned to appear before the Resident Magistrate at Mitchelstown on the 9th of September. They did not appear, and warrants were issued for their arrest. Outside, there was a holiday gathering. The people from all the countryside had come in a grand procession, half a mile long, with bands and banners, to give a welcome to some English visitors who had come to show their interest in Ireland and its concerns, and to express sympathy with Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Mandeville. The crowds had gathered into the square, a large open space on the side of a hill, and it was proposed to hold a meeting. Wagonettes containing the speakers were arranged on the top of the slope with several thousand people gathered in front of them, flanked by the farmers who had come with the procession on horseback. In the wagonettes were Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Brunner, fresh from his victory at Northwich, Mr. Dillon, and some other Irish members. There was a group of English ladies, too, and a Correspondent who was present says the people welcomed them and the English members of Parliament

with deafening cheers. "The multitudes," says this eye-witness, "seemed as good-humoured and joyous as they were well conducted, and everything promised to pass off successfully." The Rev. Dr. McCarthy took the chair and called on Mr. Dillon to speak. While Mr. Dillon was speaking and the people were listening intently, there was a stir on the edge of the crowd. A Government reporter sent to take down the speeches had arrived late, and brought with him a dozen or fifteen policemen, who without asking leave to pass tried to force their way through the mass. The people resisted and the police struck them with their bâtons. This brought on a fight, in which the people won, driving the police off. The meeting went on, but in a few moments a larger body of armed constables appeared and rushed at the crowd, scattering them in all directions. Again, however, the police were beaten back and fled to the shelter of the barracks, from which they fired into the street, killing an old man on the spot, fatally wounding another, and injuring many more. The members of Parliament appealed to the Resident Magistrate to find out, by inspecting the rifles, who had fired, but he refused. Had not the instruction gone forth several months before "Do not hesitate to shoot?"

The chief difference between this act of violence and many others which had gone before it, was that Englishmen and Englishwomen were present to witness it and to report about it. The accounts of it which were published in every newspaper in the kingdom, raised a feeling of the liveliest indignation and horror. Nothing that had heretofore occurred in Ireland brought home so vividly to the English and Scottish multitudes the character of the police rule, which Lord Carnarvon had endeavoured to modify in 1885, which Lord Aberdeen had utterly changed in 1886, and which Mr. Balfour was now endeavouring to restore. The subject was brought before the House of Commons at its next sitting, when Mr. Balfour declared that the police acted in self-defence, and had been subjected to one of



the most brutal and unprovoked attacks in the melancholy history of Irish public meetings. It was Mr. Balfour's method to take the part of the officials. He took no trouble to verify any of their statements, but when any question was put, he gave the reply which had been furnished to him, and charged with falsehood all who brought evidence in contradiction of it. It was a simple method, but it did not answer in the long run. In this Mitchelstown case an inquest was held, and after a long investigation, in which some irregularities, such as a juror giving evidence and counsel addressing the jury, were permitted, a verdict of wilful murder was returned against the County Inspector and several constables. The verdict was appealed against and quashed on the ground of the irregularities in the conduct of the inquest, and an investigation by the police naturally resulted in their acquitting themselves of any serious responsibility. Nothing more was done, but the police attack upon a legal and constitutional meeting was the subject of universal discussion in Great Britain. Mr. John Morley, in a speech at Newcastle on the 24th of September, asked a great meeting whether, if the Chief Constable of Newcastle wished and had a right to come to that platform, he would attempt to drive thirty or forty of his constabulary through six or seven thousand men up to the platform. The same question was asked in hundreds of meetings, and there could be but one answer. Mr. Balfour's defence of this act of high-handed violence at Mitchelstown brought home to every meeting at which it was mentioned, the true nature of Mr. Balfour's rule, and "Remember Mitchelstown" became a watchword in the political strife. A fortnight later Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Mandeville were brought up before the Resident Magistrate. A new feature in such trials was the presence in court of a number of English visitors, Mrs. Bateson, Miss Cobden, Miss Mander, Mr. T. Eccleston Gibb, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. Heald, Mr. Boyd, and others. The proceedings lasted two days, and the magistrates found Mr. O'Brien and

Mr. Mandeville guilty under the Crimes Act, and sentenced Mr. O'Brien to three months' imprisonment, and Mr. Mandeville to two months. They appealed, but the sentences were confirmed.

The next step in the suppression of the National League was taken on the 20th of September, when about two hundred branches in the counties of Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Wexford and Galway were suppressed. In these districts it was thus made to be a crime to belong to the League, to hold a meeting of the League, or even to report such a meeting in a newspaper. In county Clare there was soon afterwards an outbreak of crime. A number of ruffians, tempted and led on by a man who was in the pay of the police, planned, with the informer's help, a raid on the house of a so-called "landgrabber," named Thomas Sexton; at Ballycastle. The police were kept informed of all their movements, and instead of stopping them, drew them on and laid a trap to catch them. On the night on which the raid was to be carried out, they filled Sexton's house, and when the marauders came, they attacked and arrested them. The moonlighters fought desperately and Police Sergeant Whelehan was killed. A coroner's jury refused to find the ruffians guilty of murder, but they were tried and sentenced to various terms of penal servitude. A sum of money levied on the district was given to Whelehan's widow, and medals were afterwards distributed to the constables who were with him in the defence of Thomas Sexton's house. This terrible crime was made great use of in defence of the Crimes Act, and was one of several events, which some supporters of that measure held to justify it. On the 29th of September a number of emergency men were seizing cattle for rent at Arklow, when a crowd attacked them. They fired, and a man named Kinsella was killed. Here the coroner's jury found some of the emergency men guilty of murder, but they were afterwards tried and acquitted.

These events, and the evictions at Bodyke, at Coolgreany,

at Herbertstown, and in various other parts of Ireland, belong to the political history of the time, because of the use that was made of them in political controversy. The story of these evictions differed but little from that which I have already told in the eighth chapter. It is the melancholy undertone of Irish history. The tears the new Niobe of nations sheds are chiefly those of evicted peasants and their families. The scenes of violence, however, were paraded by one side to show that Ireland was lawless; the evictions were dwelt on by the other side to show from what it was that Lord Salisbury's Government was not to flinch. The suppression of the League was followed up by the proclamation of a meeting at Woodford, the scene of the Clanricarde evictions, on Sunday, the 16th of October. The people were forbidden to hold the meeting on that day, and police and troops were sent to occupy the ground. They held the place all day, and as there was no sign of any gathering of the people, they went home at night to their beds. When they had gone the people flocked in from all the country round. The town was illuminated, and bonfires were lighted on the hills. At one o'clock on the morning of Monday the 17th the meeting was held by torchlight, and Mr. William O'Brien addressed the delighted multitudes, burning the Lord Lieutenant's proclamation in the course of his speech. Mr. Wilfrid Blunt also spoke, and told the people of the sympathy many English people felt with them in their struggle to be free. Dublin Castle had been outwitted, for the meeting was unlawful on Sunday the 16th when it was forbidden, but not on the 17th when it had not been forbidden. Moreover, the telegraph wires had been cut, and the local authorities could not summon back the forces that had gone home earlier in the night, so that the few policemen present looked on with amusement. Mr. Blunt announced that he would hold a meeting of the Home Rule Union there on the 23rd of October. As soon as this was known at Dublin the meeting was forbidden, but believing the



repeated assurances which had been given in the debates on the Crimes Bill, that political movements would not be interfered with, Mr. Blunt wrote a letter of protest and went to Woodford to hold the meeting. At the appointed time he ascended the platform with Lady Anne Blunt and Mr. and Mrs. Rowlands, and one or two other English visitors. The police at once hustled them off. Mr. Blunt again attempted to get upon the platform and was thrown off, fainting. Recovering himself, he mounted the platform a third time, and was then arrested, and carried off to the police barracks. The police then attacked the people with their bâtons, and dispersed the meeting, wounding about thirty persons, some of them seriously. Mr. Blunt was brought up under the Coercion Act and sentenced to two months' imprisonment. He appealed, but in vain, and early in the next year had to go to prison for the crime of attempting to hold a public meeting. In prison he was deprived of his great coat in the bitter winter weather, and was treated as an ordinary criminal. The presence of Englishmen and Englishwomen at Irish evictions, and Irish meetings, and Irish police-court trials, was seriously embarrassing to the officials who were carrying out the policy of "government that does not flinch," and Mr. Balfour hoped, by not flinching from treating Mr. Blunt as a common malefactor, to warn other English people off. In this hope he was entirely disappointed. Mr. Blunt had the satisfaction of knowing that his endurance for two months of "the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely," was one of the strongest of the many influences which worked together to make Home Rule inevitable.

The first important political movement of the Parliamentary recess in England was a Conference of the Liberals of Sussex, held at Lewes on the 28th of September, and addressed by Sir William Harcourt. On the first of October there was a great gathering of the Liberals of Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, and Somersetshire, under Lord Wolverton's chairmanship, at Templecombe, which was

addressed by Mr. John Morley. At both these meetings energetic protests were made against the renewed reign of proscription and police violence in Ireland. On the 18th and 19th of the same month the annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation was held at Nottingham. The Committee of the Federation in their Report had many reasons for congratulation. The Coercion Act had proved that the anticipations of the Liberal party at the election in 1886 were justified, and that a Parliament which refused Home Rule must resort to Coercion. The by-elections, too, had proved that in almost every case the position of the Liberal party was better than it had been even in the election of 1885. The Conference set forth the Liberal programme, in a series of resolutions proposed by leading members of the party, and carried with enthusiasm. The points were, Home Rule, Welsh Disestablishment, "One man, one vote," Land Law Reform, Allotments for Labourers, County Government, Local Option, London Municipal Government, and Free Education. The meeting also recorded an emphatic protest "against the action of the Government in leaving the people over a great part of Ireland at the mercy of indiscriminate and undirected force, and in recklessly attempting to bring back into practice the old tyrannical Tory principles in respect of the rights of Public Meeting, Free Speech, a Free Press, and Free Combination." Mr. Gladstone made two speeches, the first at the Annual Meeting of the Federation, with Sir James Kitson in the chair, the second at a great public meeting in the Skating Rink, over which Mr. Alderman Gripper presided. In the first speech he spoke of the deplorable murder of poor Sergeant Whelehan, in the got-up raid on Sexton's house at Ballycastle, and said that the idea of employing men who help in planning and getting up the crime in order then to turn informers against it, is an abomination, disgraceful even to administration in Ireland, and, he believed quite unheard of in England.

Mr. Gladstone held that the Government were entirely responsible for the events at Mitchelstown. "What was the beginning of the mischief in Mitchelstown?" he asked. "Why, in a meeting not arranged like this, comfortably in seats, but in a meeting closely packed together and standing together in the open air, and amounting, as we are told, to 4,000 or 5,000 people, a wedge of fifteen or eighteen policemen was endeavoured to be driven into that meeting—to force its way through the dense crowd, with a view of bringing a Government reporter to some spot which they thought to be a fit and suitable place. Well, in the first place, it is admitted beyond all doubt that no such proceeding ever was taken in Ireland before. It is plain from the instructions contained in the circular of the police, which, with great difficulty and great effort, was brought out to the public view, that the course taken was totally out of keeping with those instructions, which invariably contemplated a timely and friendly arrangement for placing the Government reporter in a position to hear the proceedings at the meeting." The result was that the police were driven back. Then they returned with forty-four more, and began to beat the horses in order to force their way through. Once more they were defeated and fled. Then it was contended that the mob followed them and stoned the barracks. "But this tremendous assault upon the barracks," said Mr. Gladstone, "is represented by windows broken by stones to the number, it is doubtful whether of two or of three. Well, I feel an interest in that number because I had just the same number of windows broken in my own house some years ago by the patriotic friends of the Tory Government." Mr. Gladstone added: "I have said, and I say again, 'Remember Mitchelstown,' for there we have an example before us, a series of acts from which we may deduce almost all that is necessary to launch us into fatal political error, or to keep us in the road of right and justice."



The autumn of 1887 brought a renewed movement of the unemployed in London which eventually led to a serious conflict between the police and the people. After forming processions along the chief thoroughfares, in which the police wisely marched with them and kept order, they held several meetings in Trafalgar Square, which were also watched by large numbers of constables. While one of these meetings was proceeding on the 17th of October, the police were ordered to clear the Square, and did so with some difficulty, arresting a number of people who were afterwards punished. The next day there was another meeting in the Square, which was also dispersed, but the people rallied again in Hyde Park, where some rioting occurred. Further conflicts happened on succeeding days; and much political feeling was aroused, and many protests were made against the action of the police. The working men of London associated the violence at Mitchelstown and elsewhere in Ireland with the suppression of the meetings in Trafalgar Square, and saw in both alike the violence of a Tory Government. A great demonstration in favour of the right of public meeting and of free speech was held at Rotherhithe on the 25th of October, and attended by fifteen thousand persons. In the early part of November more meetings in Trafalgar Square were broken up, and on the eighth of November Mr. Bennett Burleigh and Mr. A. F. Winkes, who were present as journalists, were arrested by the police on the charge of obstructing them in the execution of their duty. This clumsy and ridiculous charge brought home to the public the danger of police rule, and the absurdity of police evidence. Sir Charles Warren, as Police Commissioner, then issued a notice prohibiting the holding of meetings in Trafalgar Square for the future. The London Radicals regarded this notice as a further arbitrary interference with the right of public meeting, and on the eleventh of November Mr. William Saunders, having given Sir Charles Warren notice of his intention, held a meeting in the Square, but

was arrested and brought before Sir James Ingham at Bow Street. But England was not Ireland, and the prosecution broke down. Sir Charles Warren then issued an amended order forbidding meetings in the Square and processions through the adjoining streets. The Metropolitan Radical Federation resolved to test the lawfulness of this proclamation by holding a meeting on Sunday, the thirteenth. The police took this as a defiance, and determined not to bring the question to a legal decision, but to fight it out. They put two thousand police in the Square, and held troops in readiness. In the afternoon came the processions, and there was desperate fighting. Many police were hurt, and two of them died of their wounds. Large numbers of the civilians were injured, and forty persons, among them Mr. John Burns and Mr. Cuninghame Graham, were arrested. At dusk the soldiers were called in to clear the Square. Mr. Burns and Mr. Cuninghame Graham were tried and sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment, and many of the working men got sentences varying from two months to six months with hard labour. The Government were alarmed, or thought it wise to seem so, and a large number of young men in various parts of London were enrolled as special constables. On Sunday the 20th they were brought out in force, and enjoyed the fun. Mr. Gladstone had appealed to the London Radicals not to attempt to hold a meeting in Trafalgar Square, and they went to the Park instead. The police attacked some of the processions, especially one which was proceeding along Holborn. That was the only serious disturbance, and London after that day settled down to quiet. The special constables were brought out one or two days more, but found the summons onerous, and some shrewdly suspected that they were being befooled. The result of these needless conflicts with working men, who had no other object in view but keeping the right of public meeting in the great Square of central London, was to give the working men of London a great distrust of the police, and a rooted dislike of their autocratic management.

The movement for putting the police in London, as in other towns, under municipal direction, and restoring to them the position and character of a purely civic force, dates its success with London public opinion from this period.

At the end of August, it had been announced in the House of Commons that the Government of the United States had agreed to the appointment of a new Commission, with respect to the North American Fisheries, and that Mr. Chamberlain would be the principal Commissioner. *The Daily News* congratulated Mr. Chamberlain on the appointment as "giving him an opportunity of retiring for a while from politics, and performing for his country a valuable service in a sphere into which no anger need follow him." Mr. Chamberlain, however, seemed anxious to show that the acceptance of an important diplomatic mission, though it would involve his temporary withdrawal from the field of political controversy, did not indicate any intention or desire to reconsider his position. In a speech at Birmingham, at the end of September, he supported the Government in everything it had done; and in another speech declared that the country was in greater danger than in the time of the Spanish Armada, for now "the enemy is within our gates, and our foes are they of our own household." Early in October he went on a visit to Ulster, where the Tories and Orangemen gave him a magnificent reception, and he responded in speeches, which naturally filled them with delight. He urged them to resist all attempts to put them under the rule of a Parliament in Dublin, and said that Home Rule must inevitably result in separation. On the 25th of October, on which day Mr. Gladstone made a journey to Ripon, Mr. Chamberlain addressed a meeting of his brother's constituents in West Islington, in which he referred to a statement that the Irish vote in America would be against any settlement he might make, and spoke of the Irish electors of the United States as having always shown their readiness to use the



privileges conceded to them by their adopted country, in order to sow dissension and ill-feeling between Great Britain and America. This indiscreet utterance came back in a day or two in hostile echoes from New York and Canada, where the leading newspapers warned him that he could not possibly succeed in his diplomatic mission. *The New York Evening Post* told Mr. Chamberlain that the Protectionists had a pecuniary game, and the Republicans a political game to carry out, by defeating the Treaty, and cautioned him against helping them to do so. *The New York Tribune* said, "It is Mr. Chamberlain himself who is imperilling the chances of a satisfactory issue by his ill-advised and irritable speeches in England." *The New York Times* spoke of his singular want of tact. *The Philadelphia Telegraph* said it was "perhaps impossible to convince Unionists in England that, a considerable part of the American people, who have not a drop of other than English and Scotch blood in their veins, sympathize with the Irish Home Rulers, for the single reason that they believe and know that the English government of Ireland is now, and ever has been, unworthy of the respect of reasonable men." *The Philadelphia Telegraph* consequently described Mr. Chamberlain's Islington speech as "foolishness of the worst sort," in a man just starting out on a diplomatic mission. *The Ottawa Free Press* declared that the only chance for the Treaty was to drop Mr. Chamberlain; and *The Toronto Globe* declared that "he must be a great deal worse than useless at Washington." Mr. Chamberlain sailed by the "Etruria" on the 29th of October, spent nearly five months in the United States, negotiated and signed a treaty, and on the 10th of April, 1888, came back. Birmingham gave him a great welcome, the Queen sent him her portrait; later in the year a beautiful and accomplished American girl allowed him to fetch her as his wife; but this great personal success was accompanied by political failure, for the American Senate rejected the Treaty.

The Municipal elections on the first of November, 1887, showed the turn of the tide in favour of the Liberals. For the first time for several years the balance of gains was on the Liberal side, though it was but eighteen in the whole country. On the 22nd of November the annual Conference of the National Union of Conservative Associations was held at Oxford. About a thousand delegates attended, and a resolution was passed with about a dozen dissentients, that "speedy reform in the policy of the United Kingdom, as regards foreign imports and influx of foreigners, is a matter of vital necessity to the people of Great Britain and Ireland." The resolution was ignored by Lord Salisbury in his addresses on the next day, in one of which he said, "The necessity for very drastic dealing with the rules of Parliament has undoubtedly arisen. I can speak with more impartiality on this subject, because I do not belong to the House which suffers from the present license. But I have colleagues in that House upon whose bodies, and, indeed, upon whose souls, I can trace the effects of the torture which the ingenuity of the eighty-six members from Ireland has invented. I have never experienced it myself, but I am told there is nothing more terrible than to go in night after night and to hear the same speakers, the same inanities, the same vituperation expressed in the same brogue, and that the strongest and sternest minds, and the best compacted bodies, are wearied out before this constant torture. Now, I object very much to having colleagues used up by a process of this kind. Any one of them is worth the whole eighty-six Irishmen put together, and I entirely object to the continuance of a system by which their powers of serving the State shall be diminished, or entirely sacrificed owing to this perfectly useless, gratuitous, and wanton waste of public time." This outburst came to nothing. The only possible cure for an overworked Parliament is the devolution of the details of purely Irish legislation and administration to a local Parliament in Dublin; and Lord Salisbury and his

colleagues utterly failed in their search for any alternative to this natural and inevitable course.

All over the country, all the autumn and all the winter long, public men were busy thrashing over and over again this well-beaten straw. At Hull, on the 25th of November, Mr. John Morley replied to what he called "the blazing indiscretion" of Lord Salisbury's Oxford speech. At the end of the month Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen made a visit to Dublin, where they had an enthusiastic welcome. The secession from the Liberal party of Mr. Lacaita, one of the members for Dundee, created a momentary flutter; but at a Conference of the Liberal Unionist Association at Westminster Town Hall, on the 8th of December, the numbers and the enthusiasm showed a marked diminution as compared with the great gathering of the year before. On the 14th of December Mr. Balfour addressed his constituents in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, when he compared Sir George Trevelyan to Bunyan's Mr. Pliable, who went with Christian a little way till they both fell into the Slough of Despond, where, said Mr. Balfour, "he promptly began to use very violent language towards his former companion, and getting out on the wrong side, ultimately returned to the City of Destruction, where he was held greatly in derision by all sorts of people." All this was Mr. Balfour's gloss on Bunyan's text, for Mr. Pliable did not abuse Christian, but said angrily, "Is this the happiness you have told me of all the while?" and struggled out and went home, when some of his neighbours called him wise for coming back, and some called him fool for hazarding himself with Christian at all, and some taunted him with cowardliness; but in the end they "all began to deride poor Christian behind his back." Mr. Balfour's main point, however, was a reply to the charge that the Tories were in alliance with the Irish in 1885. "In 1885," said Mr. Balfour, "the Irish came to the Conservatives, in 1887 the Radicals have gone to the Irish." "Heaven forbid," he further said, "that I should



interfere for one moment with the free speech of a free people, but when it comes to the open advocacy of crime, when these men, who come here and speak softly to the English people, go over to Ireland and urge the excitable peasantry of Kerry and Clare to resist the law, then, I say, "you have passed the bounds of political discussion ;" then, I say, "you have ceased to be politicians, and you have become criminals, and as criminals I shall proceed against you." The appeal to Heaven was vain. As Mr. Balfour was determined to interfere with the free speech of a free people, Heaven did not forbid it, but let him have his wilful way. "What has the Lord Mayor of Dublin been sent to prison for?" asked Sir William Harcourt the next day, in a brilliant speech at Bournemouth ; "For reports which any newspaper in England might publish with perfect impunity, and which they do publish every day." Lord Salisbury afterwards went down to Derby to answer Sir William Harcourt, and at Dover, where he stopped on his way to Italy, Mr. Gladstone replied to Lord Salisbury. "Do you think," he said, "that when the Irish people see the Lord Mayor of Dublin—a courteous, accomplished, amiable man, of whom I may speak from my own knowledge—sent to prison, do you think anything can more tend to demoralize them, and widen the breach that separates them from the law of the country?"

This imprisonment of the Lord Mayor of Dublin had given the Government some trouble. Mr. T. D. Sullivan, the Lord Mayor, was the owner of *The Nation* newspaper, which published some reports of meetings of suppressed branches of the National League. He was summoned before a magistrate, and on the 6th of October the High Sheriff and the Corporation went with him in full state from the Mansion House to the Court, where he was to take his trial. The Stipendiary magistrate, Mr. O'Donel, an accomplished lawyer, and not one of the Removable officials, thought the Government should prove that the meeting, of which a report had been published, had really

been held. The Government could not do this, and the case was consequently dismissed, and the Lord Mayor went back to the Mansion House in the midst of a great popular demonstration and triumph. The Government appealed to a superior court, the magistrate's objection was overruled and at a second trial, on the second of December, the Lord Mayor was found guilty and sentenced to two months imprisonment, the magistrate, however, ordering him to be treated as a first-class misdemeanant. On the same day, Mr. Edward Harrington, M.P., was tried before two Resident Magistrates or Removables for publishing reports of suppressed branches of the League in his paper, *The Kerry Sentinel*. He was sentenced to a month's imprisonment. He asked that it might be lengthened to enable him to appeal, but the request was refused, and he was sent to gaol as a common criminal. While in gaol he was summoned to give evidence at Tralee, the chief town of the division which he represented in Parliament, and as an additional humiliation to him, the Government insisted that he should appear in Court in prison dress. Mr. T. Harrington, his brother, had once been a partner in *The Kerry Sentinel*, but had retired for some years, though he had forgotten to remove his name from the registered list of proprietors. He was acting as counsel to some men who were being prosecuted for attending a midnight meeting, but on the day before their case was called, he was arrested for his brother's offence, and taken off to gaol. The poor men whose counsel was thus snatched from them could get no postponement of their trial, and were found guilty, and sent for a month's imprisonment. Mr. T. Harrington was tried before two Resident Magistrates at Tralee, and sentenced to six weeks imprisonment. He appealed, but Mr. Balfour did not allow the appeal to come on, and the prosecution was dropped. Absolutely indefensible as the prosecution proved to be, the Resident Magistrates had not only allowed it, but had found Mr. T. Harrington guilty, though it was proved in Court before them, that in

December, 1879, he had executed a legal assignment to his brother of all interest in the paper, and had from that time ceased to have any connection with it. He had not even known of the reports for which these men sentenced him to six weeks imprisonment.

*The Cork Herald* also published reports of meetings of suppressed branches of the League, and its editor, Mr. Alderman Hooper, M.P. for South-East Cork, was tried for the "crime" before two Resident Magistrates, who of course found him guilty and, to prevent him from appealing, gave him two separate sentences of imprisonment of a month each. Like the other political prisoners under Mr. Balfour's administration, Mr. Hooper was treated as a common criminal. He protested, and resisted the wearing of the prison dress, but was stripped by the warders, dressed in it, and sent to take exercise with two criminals who were in prison for stabbing. He refused to submit to this indignity, and was kept without exercise for twenty-four days. Mr. Hooper also protested against the performance of some menial functions, and was kept on bread and water for five days. He came out of prison seriously injured in health, and had a long illness.

The proceedings at the hearing of Mr. O'Brien's appeal on the 31st of October were a very striking illustration of the method of administering justice in Ireland. The appeal came on for hearing before the Recorder at Middleton, county Cork. While the case was proceeding Mr. O'Brien rose to leave the Court, but was stopped by the police. After some protest and argument the Judge rose and said that as Mr. O'Brien was not under arrest he was at perfect liberty to leave. Thereupon the Resident Magistrate sprang on to a table and ordered the police to arrest Mr. O'Brien, which was done at once, and the Judge had to submit to be overruled, and to see the law set at defiance in his own Court. Mr. O'Brien and Mr. John Mandeville were then formally committed, and were sent to Cork prison. But they were not to stay at Cork. The



Mayor of Cork, as a visiting justice of the gaol, had indiscreetly said that he would go there every day and see that no harm came to the popular hero. Mr. Balfour had avowed to Mr. Wilfrid Blunt that his policy was to wear out the patience and break down the resistance of the Irish leaders by prison austerities, and these were to be tried on Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Mandeville. Mr. O'Brien, however, was a delicate man, whom the officials were afraid of killing in prison if he was too harshly treated, while Mr. Mandeville was a large, strong, vigorous person, whom there seemed to be no fear of hurting permanently. On the second morning of their imprisonment at Cork, they were called at half-past four and told to be ready for a journey. "In God's name where at this hour in the morning?" asked Mr. O'Brien. "We know no more than you," said the deputy governor; "we were routed out of bed ourselves." An officer had come from Dublin with sealed orders, and even the police did not know their destination. Going out into the corridor Mr. O'Brien met Mr. Mandeville. "Did you ever hear anything more like a midnight murder?" said Mr. O'Brien. "I suppose that's what they are up to," replied Mr. Mandeville, but added with a laugh, "It will take a good deal to kill me." Mr. Mandeville was suffering from diarrhoea, caused by the cocoa given him overnight. At half-past five on the cold November morning they were driven off, not knowing whither, to the railway station. A train was waiting, and they got into it, all the officers, who felt the hardship of the situation, treating them with great consideration and kindness. At half-past ten they got to Tullamore gaol in the county of Westmeath. In a few days it became known that Mr. O'Brien had refused to put on the prison dress, and that, on the sixth of November, the doctor had said that no force must be used towards him; but he was put on bread and water on alternate days. Mr. Mandeville had also refused, and had then been twenty-four hours on bread and water. On the eighth of November Mr. O'Brien was removed to

the prison infirmary. On the fourteenth it was announced in all the papers that Mr. O'Brien had, two days before, had his clothes taken away and others substituted for them. A week later it was announced that an entirely new suit of clothes had been smuggled into Mr. O'Brien's cell, in which he had dressed himself. All these events excited universal interest, and at hundreds of meetings all over the country protests were made against Mr. O'Brien's treatment. Lord Salisbury thought it needful to refer to the matter in his Oxford speech. "What is there in the acts of Mr. O'Brien," he asked, "to make him a hero and a martyr? I do not refer to the history of his small-clothes. Their vicissitudes will not furnish the theme for an epic; but I hope an Irish bard will arise worthy of the subject. But, taking the man apart from his clothes, what is there to excite the sympathy of English Liberals?" Speaking at Penrith on the next day, Sir William Harcourt answered the question by saying that the men whom the Government attacked, like Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, were not criminals. What stirred the popular indignation in England was that they were being treated as criminals.

Mr. O'Brien won the victory and kept his clothes. Mr. Balfour was afraid to carry the prison severities too far, because of the continued reports from the medical officers of his victim's ill-health. When he came out of prison he was in a terribly reduced condition, and was obliged to go abroad for rest and recruitment. Mr. Mandeville was less fortunate, and on him all the brutalities of Mr. Balfour's short way with the Irish leaders fell heavily. Like Mr. O'Brien, he refused to be treated as a common criminal, and he was severely punished in consequence. Two days after his arrival at Tullamore gaol, he was kept for twenty-four hours on bread and water; from the fourteenth to the seventeenth he was three days on bread and water; on the eighth and ninth of December forty-eight hours on the same fare, and on the twentieth and twenty-first he had two days solitary confinement in the punishment cell. Dr.

Moorhead, one of the magistrates who visited the prison, reported on the tenth of November that Mr. Mandeville was suffering from sore throat and that his breathing was bad. The governor, however, had peremptory orders to make him wear the prison dress, and one night he entered the cell, roused him from sleep, had him stripped, taking away even his shirt, and left the prison clothes for his only wear. On the next day Dr. Moorhead found Mr. Mandeville walking about the cell wrapped in the quilt and the sheet. These were afterwards taken from him, and he was compelled to put on the habiliments of crime and criminals. This treatment undermined a strong constitution, and he died a few months after his release. An inquest was held, at which the governor of the prison gave details of the punishments Mr. Mandeville endured, and much evidence was given as to the ill effect of these severities upon him. Dr. Ridley, the visiting physician of the prison, committed suicide on the morning of the day on which his evidence was to have been taken, and a coroner's jury, on which there were only two Nationalists, found that he committed suicide during temporary insanity, brought on by apprehension of disclosures at the inquest on Mr. Mandeville; and that he had been compelled to act in his official capacity in contravention of his own humane and considerate views. During the long inquiry into Mr. Mandeville's death, it was shown that he had tied a rope round his waist that he might tighten it to appease his hunger, that on one day a warder threw into his cell a scrap of meat as he would throw it to a dog, which the prisoner ate voraciously, and that in the punishment cell he was compelled to wear slippers, and the cold from the flagged floor chilled him up to the knees. All this severity was due to the resolve of a high-minded and public-spirited man, who was animated by the best motives of patriotism and philanthropy, not to submit to the indignity of wearing the prison dress. It was shown that he had been offered removal to the hospital if he would put on the garb of crime. An intimation was



made to the jury that Mr. Mandeville drank himself to death, but no evidence was offered to prove it, and his widow testified that he had been for some time a teetotaler and had a horror of drink. The coroner's jury found that Mr. Mandeville's death was due to the brutal treatment to which he had been subjected in Tullamore gaol. Mr. Balfour treated the verdict with contempt. Speaking on this melancholy tragedy at a meeting at Glasgow on the first of October, 1888, he said he saw nothing but what was comic in the whole proceeding. "Is it credible," he asked, amid the loud laughter of his audience, "that men with any sense of humour whatever can suppose that Irish independence is to be gained by living three weeks without changing one's shirt, or by sitting on one's bed in a blanket rather than wear prison clothes?"

The cases of Mr. Denis McNamara, a grocer in Ennis, of Mr. Jeremiah Brosnan, a tradesman of Killarney, and Mr. Thomas O'Rourke, a shopkeeper in Tralee, illustrated another aspect of Mr. Balfour's war upon the press. Mr. McNamara was convicted at Ennis on the 26th of November, of selling copies of *United Ireland*, which contained reports of meetings of suppressed branches of the League. He was sentenced to seven days imprisonment. On the 16th of December the police ransacked his house and carried off thirty dozen copies of the paper, and on the 24th of December he was sent to two months imprisonment, with hard labour, for selling some more copies. He was afterwards fined two pounds for showing in his shop window a transparency with a harp and shamrocks, and the motto, "God save Ireland." Mr. O'Rourke had just lost his wife, and been left with the charge of a large family of little children, when, for the same crime of selling a newspaper, he was torn away from them and sent for a month to prison. Mr. Flynn mentioned in the House of Commons a number of cases of the arrest of newsboys for refusing to sell papers to policemen. These lads were not prosecuted, but were haled off to the Bridewell by the constable to whom the

refused to sell, and after a short detention were released. Mr. Clancy, the member for Dublin county, in "A Year of 'Unionist' Coercion," gave a list, which he had carefully compiled from the reports in the newspapers of the prosecutions in the first six months under the Coercion Act, which showed that 697 persons had been prosecuted, and 541 convicted of constructive, or imaginary, or political crimes.

The prosecutions of members of Parliament for speeches to their constituents were carried out with the same unflinching determination. Mr. David Sheehy, M.P., was prosecuted for advising some tenant farmers in his constituency to resist eviction. His wife was dangerously ill, but he was dragged away and denied bail pending his trial. After his sentence of a month's imprisonment he was taken to an empty cell, where he refused to change his clothes. Five warders threw him down and stripped him, leaving him naked with an open window, which was above his reach, in order to force him to put on the prison dress. His bed was a plank, he was put on bread and water for refusing to do menial and degrading work, and was roused in the early morning of the 3rd of January, forcibly dressed in prison clothes, and taken a long journey to Portumna to appear as a witness in the prosecution of Mr. Wilfrid Blunt. Mr. W. J. Lane, M.P., was prosecuted for a speech to his constituents, which was said by the police to be likely to injure a landlord, Dr. Hayes. At the trial Mr. Lane asked Dr. Hayes "Have you suffered in any way by my speech?" Dr. Hayes answered "No." "Did you make any complaint to any one connected with the Crown on account of my speech?" "I did not." It was shown, too, that Dr. Hayes had expressed his entire satisfaction with Mr. Lane's speech and his willingness to leave to Mr. Lane the settlement of the dispute with his tenants. In spite of this evidence, Mr. Balfour's "Removables" found Mr. Lane guilty of incitement to conspiracy to injure Dr. Hayes, and gave him a month's imprisonment. At the gaol he was

stripped by force and dressed in prison clothes, was put on a plank bed, was given nothing but bread and water for eight days, and was shut in his cell for twenty-two days. Mr. J. R. Cox, M.P., Mr. Douglas Pyne, M.P., Mr. James Gilhooly, M.P., all underwent similar treatment. One result of these prosecutions was that when the next Session of Parliament was opened on the 9th of February, 1888, the first announcement made by the Speaker was that he had received letters announcing the imprisonment under the Crimes Act of Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. E. Harrington, Mr. Sheehy, Mr. Hooper, Mr. Lane, Mr. Cox, Mr. Blane, Mr. William O'Brien, and Mr. T. Harrington.



## CHAPTER XV.

*A TROUBLED YEAR.*

THE new year opened with a contested election at Winchester. Colonel Tottenham, who had been returned at the General Election by 1,119 against 783 polled by Mr. Archibald Grove, died on the 5th of December, and the ballot for his successor took place on the 5th of January. The Conservative candidate was Mr. Moss, a local brewer, who had been set aside in 1885 to prevent a Tory split. His opponent was Mr. Vanderbyl, whom he defeated by 1,364 to 849. After the losses at Burnley, Spalding, Coventry, and Northwich in the year before, this increase in the majority by which a Tory seat was kept, gave great comfort to *The Times*, which taunted the Dean of Winchester with having "received Mr. Dillon, the chief apostle of the Plan of Campaign, as his guest," and took the increased Tory poll as "a proof that all the clamour of the Gladstonians is without avail." On the 8th Mr. Wilfrid Blunt's appeal against his conviction under the Coercion Act was heard, with results already described, and on the next day Mr. Roche, the Resident Magistrate at Tralee, delivered, on his own behalf and that of his colleague, Colonel Peirse, the astounding judgment in the case of Mr. T. Harrington mentioned in the previous chapter.

On the same day Sir Henry James made a great speech at Glasgow, in which he avoided any reference to Mr. Wilfrid Blunt's imprisonment, but speaking of the inventor of the Plan of Campaign, said, "These are the men who are in one sense responsible for the passing of the Crimes Act; but there

are greater offenders than they, the men who, having been responsible Ministers of the Crown, know that their duty is to administer the law ; the men who now give their moral sanction to crime." That a man of Sir Henry James's geniality and fairness of mind should fling so monstrous an accusation at his personal friends and old political associates, is the strongest possible illustration of the angry feeling which the Campaign of Calumny had produced. A couple of days later Mr. Bright wrote a letter to be read at a meeting at Handsworth, in which he spoke with the utmost contempt of the Irish members, from whom, if the Home Rule Bill had passed, the Queen would have had to select her confidential advisers in Irish matters. "Look over the names of some of these men," wrote Mr. Bright. "Begin with Mr. Parnell, and then go on to O'Brien, and Dillon, and Healy, and O'Connor, and Harrington, and Biggar, and possibly we might add to them some of the Irish patriots who collect funds for the Irish revolution, but who now prudently keep the Atlantic between them and the Irish Courts of Law." Mr. Bright wrote this and other letters, as Sir Henry James made his Glasgow speech, in the unquestioning belief in the forged letter and the charges in "Parnellism and Crime." The genuineness of this impudent forgery, and the truth of these charges and allegations were the chief points in the political belief of the Dissident Liberals in 1888, and their actions and expressions must be judged in the light which this delusion throws upon them. When Sir Henry James made his speech, and when Mr. Bright wrote his letter, they were under a spell, which, unlike that of Circe,

The daughter of the sun, whose charmed cup  
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape  
And downward fell into a grovelling swine,

made them look on their opponents as grovellers

And all their friends and native home forget,  
in indignation at the imaginary association of those friends

with crime, or their moral sanction of it. Mr. Bright, in his letter, spoke of "the credulity of a rash and unthinking party," and it was more than thirteen months before the public confession of his forgeries by Richard Pigott was to show to which side the charge of credulity, of rashness and of unthought belonged. The politics of this critical period can only be properly understood when we remember that the Tories and Dissentient Liberals allowed themselves to be completely carried away by the Campaign of Calumny, and that the Liberals met it with steadfast disbelief. The side that was all this while under a delusion, saw the other side through the distorting atmosphere of their delusion, and therefore spoke with all sincerity, like Mr. Bright, of "the credulity of a rash and unthinking party," or like Sir Henry James, described their old colleagues as "men who give their moral sanction to crime." As Pope says,

All seems infected that the infected spy,  
As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.

Lord Salisbury, in a speech at Liverpool on the 11th, thought it needful to refer to Mr. Wilfrid Blunt's imprisonment by saying that the Opposition had sent over English agitators to urge the Irish to break the law, and he added, "I am glad to say that some, at least, of these English agitators have been punished." Mr. Blunt, however, had only tried to hold a meeting of the English Home Rule Union, had been pulled from the platform by the police before he spoke, and had been tried on the charge of resisting the police in the execution of their duty. Lord Salisbury had nearer anxieties than this. He went to Liverpool to tell his Tory supporters that though they had Tory administration they could not have Tory legislation. "Our measures," he said, "must bear to a certain extent the colour which the support of the Unionist party lends to them." He continued: "If for the sake of a great public object—an object transcending other objects—you are maintaining the Government on the support of that



which is not a Coalition, but is an Alliance, you must not wonder, you must not blame us, if to a certain extent, as I have expressed it, the colour of the convictions of the Unionist Liberals, joins with the colour of the convictions of the Conservative party, in determining the hue of the measures that are presented to Parliament." He then plainly told his Tory friends that they must not force a quarrel with their Liberal allies, lest a dissolution should be rendered needful at a time which would be inopportune ; a threat which had equal force for both classes of his supporters, and kept them both in order. It said to the Liberals, "You shall have some influence on our measures, but you must give us a free hand in Ireland." The Tory war against the right of public meeting went on merrily both in London and in Ireland, and on the Liberal side preparations were made to give some Irish political prisoners a great popular reception when, after their release, they arrived in London. On the 28th of January Mr. J. R. Cox, M.P., who had been arrested in London, was sent to prison at Limerick, and two days later Father McFadden, parish priest of Gweedore, was arrested at Armagh, and sent to prison for three months on the charge of inciting tenants not to pay rent. Mr. Cox's arrest on British soil brought home to Englishmen what Coercion was, and intensified the growing feeling, which Sir M. Hicks-Beach in a speech at Bristol described as the people of England standing aghast at the Coercive policy in Ireland. *The Manchester Guardian* said that if it was good policy to make martyrs, Mr. Balfour had power to do it, and it was clear he had the will. The period between New Year's Day and the meeting of Parliament was one of great political activity, meetings being held and speeches made in all parts of the kingdom. The movements of the recess closed and culminated in a magnificent reception, which was given to Mr. John Morley and Lord Ripon in Dublin on the 1st and 2nd of February ; and in a great speech by Sir William Harcourt to his constituents two days before the beginning of the Session. On

the last day of the recess Mr. Gladstone came back from the Continent, was welcomed by a great multitude at Dover, and was presented with an address at Shorncliffe station, where he spoke for a few minutes, pointing out that in this country alone, which boasts itself the home of liberty, we saw the painful spectacle of one nation holding another nation down by force.

Parliament was opened on the 9th of February. The Queen's Speech reported the completion of the demarcation of the Afghan boundary ; the unsuccessful mission to Abyssinia to stop the King from going to war with Italy ; the Conference at Washington ; the negotiations with the French Republic on the regulation of the Suez Canal ; the Joint Naval Commission with France in the New Hebrides ; and the satisfactory progress of the Sugar Bounties Conference. The House of Commons was separately informed, not only of the Estimates, as usual, but of the provision to be asked for the defence of Ports and Coaling Stations, and of the "arrangement for providing a special squadron for the protection of Australasian Commerce, the cost of which will be partially borne by the Colonies themselves." The Irish legislation was declared to have had satisfactory results, and measures were promised "to develop the resources of Ireland, and to facilitate an increase in the number of the proprietors of the soil." Local Government had a paragraph to itself ; the prospects of commerce were reported as "more hopeful," but not those of agriculture, and the interests of that great industry were commended to the attentive care of Parliament, "in the hope that means may be discovered for enabling it to meet more effectually the difficulties under which it labours." Land Transfer, Tithe Collection, Technical Education, undue preference in Railway Rates, the abuses in the promotion of Limited Companies, and Employers' Liability, were mentioned as subjects for legislation ; while measures for improving the position of the Universities, for dealing with Borough Police, and for decreasing the cost of Private Bill Legisla-

tion were promised for Scotland. The Liberals lost no time in challenging Mr. Balfour's proceedings in Ireland. In his speech on the Address, Mr. Gladstone said that "while in Ireland the administration of the criminal law in general is extremely easy, easier than in England and Scotland, less in proportion to the population, and seldom presenting those horrible cases of human depravity which, I am sorry to say, too frequently occur on this side of the water—while that easy portion of the criminal law remains, and very properly remains, where it was, in the hands of judges and juries, there is, on the other hand, one department of criminal law in Ireland that is delicate, morbid, and susceptible, and that is kept alive with almost all that is most painful in the last three centuries of Irish history, that is the agrarian criminal law, which, of all others, demands in Ireland the application of the ablest and the finest hand. That agrarian criminal law, so far as we are able to discern, has been, as an ordinary rule, transferred from judges and juries, taken away from the superior courts, hardly finding its place there at all, and carried over to men of a lower stamp, in the great majority of instances to men dependent on the Executive Government for their appointment to their places, for their retention in their places, and for promotion from their places. So that the Executive Government, with regard to this most delicate—this, the only delicate and difficult portion of Irish administration—the Irish Government, representing a particular party in this House, has become, more perhaps than at any other period, the *primum mobile*, the main-spring of the action of the criminal law." This statement was scarcely challenged on the other side of the House. Mr. Balfour had, in fact, become the law. Mr. Frederic Harrison, in his New Year's address, had correctly described him as masquerading in the cloak and with the sword of Cromwell. In the course of the debate Lord Cavan told of some people who had gone to Ireland to see matters for themselves, whose luggage had been searched, who



were followed by detectives as though they had been criminals, and who had all six come back Home Rulers ; and Mr. James Rowlands described how he had been watched by Government spies at every turn. Mr. Balfour began his reply by taunting Mr. Gladstone with having "used all the resources of his admirable rhetoric to inflame the public mind against the action of policemen who had died in the execution of their duty." Mr. Gladstone rose and said : "There is not a syllable of foundation for the allegation." Mr. Balfour said he would leave the question to those who remembered the speech at Nottingham. "Quote it !" exclaimed Mr. Gladstone. "Quote, quote !" cried the House. Mr. Balfour said that was the impression the speech left on his mind. Mr. John Morley, who spoke next, said : "I think the House will be able to judge from the temper of the opening remarks of the right honourable gentleman of the tact and the temper with which he is administering the Coercion Act in Ireland." The debate then wandered off into other matters.

Public attention was, meanwhile, diverted from the House of Commons by important movements outside. There were many protests by religious bodies against Mr. Balfour's Coercive doings. A large meeting of Nonconformist ministers of Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, and Shropshire was held early in February at Birmingham, at which the Rev. W. F. Clarkson presided, and strong resolutions against the oppressive policy of the Government in Ireland were passed unanimously. An address was sent to Mr. Gladstone from resident members of the University of Oxford, and another from 108 Nonconformist ministers of Norwich and Norfolk. On the day Parliament opened an appeal to the clergy of the Church of England was issued, inviting their signatures to an address to Mr. Gladstone in favour of Home Rule and against Coercion. The appeal was signed by the Dean of Winchester (Dr. Kitchin), the Dean of Manchester (Dr. Oakley), Bishop Abraham, Canon of Lichfield ; Canon Butler, of Winchester ; Canon

Fremantle, of Canterbury; Canon Scott-Holland, of St. Paul's; Canon Wilberforce (Southampton); the Rev. A. T. Lyttleton, Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge; the Rev. Sir J. E. Philipps, of Warminster; the Rev. R. Eyton, Prebendary of St. Paul's; the Rev. Dr. J. C. Cox, of Barton-le-Street; and the Rev. H. C. Shuttleworth, of St. Nicholas Cole Abbey. The response was not large, but the names published with the address were those of men of influence. A large number of Nonconformist ministers in London met at the Memorial Hall on the 9th of February to protest against "the recent development of Coercive measures by the present Administration." Dr. Parker, who presided, said that the men who were coercing Irish patriots would to-morrow, if opportunity offered, coerce English Nonconformists. The Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, in proposing a resolution of protest, said that he wondered the people of Ireland remained so patient as they did under a policy that revived the worst memories of Sidmouth and the tyrannies of the Stuarts. A Vigilance Committee was appointed, which included Dr. Parker, Dr. Hannay, Dr. Booth, Dr. Clifford, Dr. Green, Dr. Stevenson, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, and the Rev. William Urwick of Dublin, who said, in his speech, that the Independent ministers of Ireland were practically unanimous for Home Rule. On the next evening Mr. Stansfeld presided over a great meeting of the Home Rule Union, and described the work of the "ambassadors" the Union had sent over to see what was going on in Ireland, and to encourage and strengthen the Irish people. Professor Thorold Rogers said he had been over about five hundred farms in Ireland and that the tenants were paying double what any English tenant would pay for the same land. Sir Wilfrid Lawson spoke of the high character and motives of Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, and evoked loud cheers by exclaiming: "Just fancy, in this democratic country, Mr. Blunt in prison, and Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons." "These things seem hopeless," he continued; "but they are not hopeless—

they cannot last," and he quoted, with great effect, Lowell's lines :

Right for ever on the scaffold,  
Wrong for ever on the throne ;  
But that scaffold sways the future,  
And behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadow,  
Keeping watch above His own.

While this meeting was being held in London, a group of English Liberals were holding a meeting at Loughrea. Mr. Shaw Lefevre presided, and said the meeting was held in response to an appeal by Lord Clanricarde's tenants. "Ejectment notices," said the appeal, "have been issued wholesale, and hang in huge bundles on half the police barracks in the East Riding of the county. Numerous decrees have been granted, and if the Government assist in putting them in force, half the country-side will be cleared of its inhabitants." The meeting was held, Mr. Lefevre said, to vindicate the right of public meeting, and to express sympathy with the threatened tenantry. It was addressed by Mr. Rowntree, M.P., Mr. Wilson, M.P., Mr. T. Ellis, M.P., Mr. Brunner, M.P., Mr. T. A. Dickson, Sir James Carmichael, Dr. Spence Watson, and Mr. Samuel Plimsoll.

On the second day of the Session, Mr. J. D. Pyne, M.P., was arrested on the steps leading into Palace Yard from Bridge Street, on a charge of unlawful assembly in Ireland. A little earlier in the same afternoon some detectives arrested Mr. P. O'Brien at the gates of Palace Yard, and walked with him to Whitehall, when it was discovered that he had been mistaken for Mr. Gilhooly. At twenty minutes past eleven at night there occurred what the reporter of *The Times* described as "one of the most extraordinary scenes that has ever occurred in the history of Parliament." Mr. Gilhooly, M.P., for whom detectives had been watching all day, left the House at night with about a hundred members. Passing out through the west



gate, the group of members was hustled and scattered by detectives, and those who still accompanied Mr. Gilhooly were surrounded by detectives and by policemen in uniform all the way to 22, Whitehall Place. While this object-lesson in Coercion was being taught to Londoners, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, the late Lord Mayor of Dublin, was on his way from Tullamore gaol to his place in Parliament. On arriving at Holyhead from Kingstown, he was met by Mr. Stuart Rendel, M.P., and a large deputation from the North Wales Liberal Federation. A carriage was in waiting, in which Mr. Sullivan was drawn by the people to the Town Hall, where a great public meeting was held, and he was presented with a complimentary address. At Bangor and at Llandudno Junction great crowds assembled to cheer him. At Chester he was taken to the Music Hall to a large public meeting, and then escorted by a torchlight procession to the hotel where he spent the night. On Saturday a great crowd, led by Mr. Henry Cobb, M.P. for the division, met him at Rugby station, and took him off to a meeting in the Skating Rink, where addresses from various Liberal Associations were presented to him. At Northampton twenty thousand people were waiting outside the station with banners, one of which was inscribed, "Northampton's welcome to Balfour's criminals," and a great procession moved off to the Corn Exchange, where Mr. Sullivan was presented with addresses from the Liberals of Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, and Buckinghamshire. The Mayor took the chair, and the Town Clerk read an address of sympathy from the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the borough. On Monday Mr. Sullivan was met at Euston station by representatives of the London Liberal and Radical Union, the Metropolitan Radical Federation, the Home Rule Union, the National Liberal Club, and other bodies, and by processions formed by the Liberal and Radical organizations all over the metropolis. All the streets around Euston were densely crowded, and the procession moved out of the

station amid universal cheering, the people crowding round Mr. Sullivan's carriage to shake hands with him, and to congratulate him. There was luncheon at Mr. Percy Bunting's house in Endsleigh Gardens, where Mr. Sullivan bowed his thanks to the people from the balcony. After luncheon the vast procession moved off to Hyde Park, greeted with cordial welcomes all the way. At Hyde Park Professor Stuart presided over a great open-air meeting, at which addresses were presented to Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Edward Harrington, who had now joined him. In the evening Professor Stuart took the chair at a banquet at the Criterion. In giving the toast of "The Queen," he expressed the hope that she might have the felicity to crown her reign by opening the first Home Rule Parliament in Dublin. Other toasts were: "Our Guests," to which Mr. Sullivan replied; "The Irish Political Prisoners" and "The United Democracies." Mr. T. P. O'Connor, in replying for the last toast, said that the Irish question was going to settle more things than the case of Ireland. "The beacon-light of land reform which was raised on an Irish hillside six or seven years ago, has already come to be a flaming torch over every part of the three kingdoms, and it will not be quenched till it has burnt feudalism to ashes."

In the House of Commons on the 10th of February, the second day of the Session, Mr. Balfour was again put on his defence by Mr. Mundella and others, and announced that the Government meant to continue to administer the Crimes Act with a firm hand. On the 13th, Mr. Picton called attention to Mr. P. O'Brien's arrest, and wished to speak of those of Mr. Gilhooly and Mr. Pyne. The Speaker said that according to all precedent, the latter arrests, did not come under questions of privilege, but that in Mr. O'Brien's arrest there was a clear case which demanded explanation. Mr. Picton then moved that the arrest of Mr. P. O'Brien was a high infringement of the privilege of Parliament. Mr. Matthews apologized for the

mistake of the police, and the Attorney General moved an amendment expressing the regret of the House at the indignity put upon the member for North Monaghan, but accepting the explanation that it was a mistake. A considerable debate followed and in the end Mr. John Morley suggested that the motion should be withdrawn and the amendment be taken as the substantive motion. Mr. Picton consented and Mr. Morley moved as an amendment to the Attorney General's motion, that the subject should be referred to the Committee of Privileges. The amendment was rejected by 246 to 151 and the Attorney General's motion was adopted.

Mr. Parnell then moved an amendment to the Address declaring that last Session's ameliorative legislation had tended to diminish agrarian crime, while the repressive legislation had alienated the sympathy and respect of the Irish people from the law, and that the "administration of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, as well as much of the action of the Executive in Ireland has been harsh, partial and mischievous." A long debate followed. On the second night Colonel Saunderson said that a statement that a land agent, named Colonel Dopping, had pointed a loaded gun at a boy had been made by Mr. Gladstone at Nottingham, and had only been withdrawn from the authorized edition of his speech after a threat of legal proceedings. Sir Charles Russell immediately explained that Mr. Gladstone had not waited for the threat, but had at once consulted him, and had told him that he did not use the word "loaded" which appeared in the reports, and at which Colonel Dopping was aggrieved. Sir Charles Russell said he had advised Mr. Gladstone that the whole passage, as bearing that wrong interpretation, should be withdrawn, and that Mr. Gladstone at once resolved to do so before any threat of legal proceedings had been heard of. The debate on Mr. Parnell's motion brought up all the aspects of the Irish question. On the fourth night Mr. William O'Brien appeared, fresh from his imprisonment, and made a search-



ing attack on Mr. Balfour's administration. Not a single branch of the National League, he said, had been really suppressed. The Plan of Campaign had not been stopped, but out of forty-three landlords to whose estates it was applied forty had come in and accepted its terms. The Mitchelstown tenants were getting larger concessions than they would have got under the Plan. Lord Salisbury, speaking when Mr. O'Brien was in prison and could not answer him, had said he was imprisoned for urging at Mitchelstown that the men who were employed in collecting just debts should be met with violence, and that in consequence some were maltreated and scalded and brought to death's door. "Yet," said Mr. O'Brien, "the very day I made that speech at Mitchelstown, all was peace with the tenants. Not another eviction took place, and Captain Plunkett who came down to superintend the eviction campaign remained, I am glad to say, and proud to say, only to turn his energies to getting up a prosecution against me. Not a single eviction has taken place from that day to this, not an act of violence has been committed, not a blow has been struck, not a single hair has been injured of any police officer or bailiff in consequence of that speech of mine. Not one, and yet Lord Salisbury is not ashamed to say what he did." This powerful speech greatly impressed the House, and when Mr. O'Brien sat down there were loud cries for Mr. Balfour, but Mr. Balfour was silent. On the next night he opened the debate in an eloquent and powerful speech, but made no reply to Mr. O'Brien's account of the result of his speech at Mitchelstown, and hinted no defence of Lord Salisbury's mistaken representation of it. With respect to Mr. O'Brien's treatment in prison Mr. Balfour said "I can assure the House that nobody watched the health of the honourable gentleman more anxiously than I did. During the whole course of his imprisonment it was a subject of daily solicitude with me, and I had the satisfaction of restoring him to his admirers two pounds heavier than

when he entered the prison." Mr. O'Brien said it was not a matter of importance but, in fact, he was five pounds lighter, to which Mr. Balfour replied that he should be happy to lay on the table of the House a curve or graphical representation of the rise and fall of Mr. O'Brien's weight during the whole time.

The debate was continued by Mr. Gladstone, a large number of the Tory members ostentatiously rising and leaving the House when he stood up to speak. After passing in review many of Mr. Balfour's statements, and saying that Irish debates would not be wanting in animation—possibly in animosity—while he was Chief Secretary, Mr. Gladstone passed to the conflict at Mitchelstown, "I never in my life uttered words, or sent words by letter or telegram, which I more rejoice to have used and am better content to have used than the words 'Remember Mitchelstown'." After telling the story over again in detail Mr. Gladstone said "In one sense, I say, that the police did not fire upon the people, for no mass of people was there to fire on. I said at Nottingham—and it is the result of all the inquiry I have made—that there were not more than twenty people in the street opposite the barracks, and under these circumstances the police actually fired into the windows of the opposite house, where there were peaceful people, women and children; and they fired deliberately at individuals, two old men and one boy, whom they destroyed. That I do not hesitate here to denounce—I think I did not use the words at Nottingham—as cruel, wanton, and disgraceful bloodshed. It recalls the period of Lord Sidmouth, and was bloodshed which, so far as I know, has had no example in its wantonness and causelessness since the memorable occasion in Manchester which is popularly known as the Massacre of Peterloo." Mr. Gladstone then passed in review the incidents of the prosecution of Mr. Sheehy, Alderman Hooper and others, charging the administrators of the Act of last year with "incredible meanness." Mr. Gladstone spoke for two hours and when

he sat down the Speaker left the chair for the usual interval at the dinner-hour. Thereupon the whole Opposition rose and cheered Mr. Gladstone for several minutes till he left the House. When the House resumed, the debate was continued by Mr. Goschen, Sir William Harcourt and Mr. John Morley, and when, at half-past one o'clock, the division was taken 229 voted for Mr. Parnell's amendment and 317 against it; a Government majority of 88.

While Mr. Goschen was speaking, Mr. Arnold Morley brought in a telegram which he handed to Mr. Gladstone. Sir Walter Foster and some other members came in with him, and it was seen from their smiles that it was the announcement of the numbers in the Southwark election. The Opposition burst into loud cheers, the Nationalist members rose and waved their hats, and Mr. Goschen said he supposed he must congratulate the members opposite on figures which would console them for the thousand diminution at Dundee. The Opposition laughed and cheered again, and Mr. Goschen said it was not usual to have such demonstrations in a speech, but he frankly admitted that everything had so entirely changed—here he was again interrupted by loud cheers as Mr. Parnell entered, and Mr. Goschen tamely remarked that the House seemed more like a public meeting at an election, than the House of Commons.

The Dundee election, to which Mr. Goschen alluded, took place on the 16th of February. On Mr. Lacaita's resignation, a difference arose over the choice of the Liberal candidate, and the majority chose Mr. J. F. B. Firth. The Liberal split reduced the Liberal vote, but did not imperil the seat. In 1886 Mr. Lacaita had polled 8,216 votes, and General Sir H. Daly 3,346; in 1888 Mr. Firth received 7,856 to General Daly's 4,217. The Liberal majority was therefore 3,639, as compared with 4,870; the diminution of a thousand, over which Mr. Goschen exulted. At Southwark the polling was on the 17th of February. Mr. Beddall, the Conservative candidate, had in 1885 got 2,611 votes,



and Mr. Cohen 2,851, a Liberal majority of 240; and Mr. Beddall in 1886 polled 2,453 votes to Mr. Cohen's 2,566, a Liberal majority of 113. On Mr. Cohen's retirement, Mr. R. K. Causton came forward as the Liberal candidate, and Mr. Beddall stood a third time. The result of the ballot was that Mr. Beddall got only 2,444 votes, a decrease of nine; while Mr. Causton received 3,638, an increase of 1,072, making the Liberal majority 1,194. The significance of this victory to the Liberals was that it showed a steady decrease of the Conservative vote since 1885, while the Liberal poll had, after a slight falling off in 1886, made a great upward bound, leaving the numbers of 1885 far behind. The polling in West Edinburgh followed on the next day; Mr. T. R. Buchanan, who had been returned as a Dissentient Liberal in 1886, by 3,013 against 2,393 for Mr. Robert Wallace, the Liberal candidate, returned to the Liberal ranks, resigned his seat and appealed to the constituency as a Liberal. He was opposed by Mr. T. Raleigh as a Dissentient Liberal, and was returned by 3,294 to 3,248; turning a Dissentient majority of 690 into a Liberal majority of 46. The 24th brought the Dissentient Liberals their revenge. In 1886 Mr. Shirley, the Liberal candidate, had beaten Mr. Fitzwilliam, the Dissentient, by 5,060 to 4,792, a Liberal majority of 268; at the election on the 24th of February, 1888, Mr. Fitzwilliam got 5,634 votes to 5,423 given to Mr. Balfour, the Liberal candidate, a Dissentient majority of 211. The next contested election was at Deptford on the 29th of February. Mr. W. J. Evelyn, who had been returned as a Conservative in 1885 by a majority of 367, and in 1886 by a majority of 627, could not vote against his election pledges by supporting the policy of Coercion, and resigned his seat. Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, though confined in an Irish prison, was brought forward by the Liberals, and Mr. Charles Darling by the Conservatives. Mr. Darling polled 4,345 against 4,070 given to Mr. Blunt in his enforced absence, a Conservative majority of 275. There were unopposed returns of Con-

servatives for the Walton division of Liverpool, and for Dublin University on the 3rd of February, for Hampstead, on Sir Henry Holland's elevation to the peerage as Lord Knutsford on the 28th, and for South-West Sussex on the 14th of March, on which day, Mr. Thomas, a Liberal, was returned unopposed for Merthyr Tydvil. On the 21st, Lord Granby, a Conservative, was returned unopposed for the Melton division, and on the 28th a contested election in the Gower division, where the Liberal candidate, Mr. Randall, defeated Mr. Llewellyn, the Conservative candidate by 3,964 to 3,358, a majority of 606. There had been division in the Liberal ranks, reducing the Liberal majority, which had been 3,457 in 1885. There had been no contest in 1886. On the balance of the by-elections of the year, as summed up at Easter, there was no gain on either side.

The Debate on the Address was brought to a conclusion on the 21st of February, after an agricultural debate, and on the Report of the Address on the 22nd, Mr. Labouchere moved an amendment, asking to be assured that no contract had been made with the King of Italy binding this country to interfere in case of a war between Italy and France. Mr. Gladstone took occasion to say not only that he was satisfied with the statements made on the part of the Government, but that it had been a matter of lively satisfaction to him to find that the course taken by Lord Salisbury, on more than one occasion, had been entirely in accordance with what he regarded as sound principles for the regulation of the foreign policy of the country. Mr. W. H. Smith cordially thanked Mr. Gladstone for the tone and temper of his remarks, and on the next day Mr. Labouchere withdrew his motion. On the 23rd, Mr. Shaw Lefevre called attention to the evictions threatened at Woodford and Loughrea, and moved a resolution calling for the reduction of arrears. Mr. Balfour did not defend Lord Clanricarde, but said that the Irish movement was becoming a socialistic revolution. Just before the division was taken

Alderman Hooper, M.P., fresh from his harsh imprisonment entered the House, and was received with loud cheers by the Liberals. Mr. Lefevre's amendment was rejected by 261 to 186, a majority of 75.

On the 24th of February the House, after a single evening's discussion, made a complete revolution in its habits, by the adoption of the rule that the House should thenceforward meet at three on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays when there was no morning sitting, and should cease all opposed business at midnight, unless a Bill, originating in Committee of Ways and Means, be under consideration, and should always adjourn at one. The House met for the first time under the new rule on the 27th of February, and at twenty minutes past four got into Committee of Supply. At twelve Mr. Courtney left the chair, and at a quarter-past twelve the House adjourned, the members cheering as they left. On the next night a change was made in the closure rule, by reducing from two hundred to one hundred the number of the majority voting for it, which were needed to carry it; and new rules were adopted, giving the Speaker or Chairman authority to order a member who was grossly disorderly to withdraw, enabling the Speaker or Chairman, after having called attention to a case of tedious repetition or irrelevance to order the member to sit down; and enabling the Chair to put forthwith or decline to put merely dilatory motions. Other rules were adopted, giving the Government greater freedom in the arrangement of business on Government days, providing that when an order of the day is read for the House to go into Committee, except Committees on a Message from the Crown, or of Supply, or of Ways and Means, the Speaker shall leave the Chair at once without putting any question, except when notice of an Instruction has been given; and providing that no amendment may be moved on Report which could not be moved in Committee, without instruction from the House; also rules giving the Speaker power to call on members to rise in their places instead



of dividing, cutting out the Committee and Report stages on the Address, giving priority after Whitsuntide to the Bills which are most advanced, abolishing the ancient practice of requiring Bills on Religion and Trade to be originated in Committee of the whole House, and re-establishing the Grand Committees. Another rule allowed the House to sit till one o'clock at an evening sitting when there had been a morning sitting.

On the first of March Sir Charles Russell moved "That having regard to the importance of preserving and protecting the right of open public meetings for Her Majesty's subjects in the metropolis, and with a view to prevent ill-will and disorder, it is desirable that an inquiry should be instituted by a Committee of this House, into the conditions subject to which such meetings may be held, and the limits of the right of interference therewith of the Executive Government." He began a powerful speech by protesting against the illegal assumption that the Government could interfere with a meeting which they thought was held for an improper purpose. As to Trafalgar Square, meetings had been held there for forty years and no question of their legality had been raised, "now by the act of the head of the police force in the metropolis, there was a peremptory, and, so far as his will was concerned, a perpetual ban proceeding from him, forbidding the use of Trafalgar Square for all meetings whatever, however legal such meetings might be, and however orderly their conduct." He then traced the history of the use of the Square for meetings, and contended that the meetings on the 13th and 20th of November were legal, and that in stopping them the authorities had exceeded their powers. He claimed for the public the full right to hold meetings in Trafalgar Square, and concluded by an eloquent statement of the value of the right. Mr. Matthews said that on the 13th of November 1882 of the police were injured, some for life, and that nearly 100 persons had been convicted. He refused to grant the inquiry. Mr. Bradlaugh asked for a special inquiry into

the conduct of the police on Sunday, the 13th of November. A great debate followed, in which the Attorney General denied that any right of public meeting existed in places through which the public had a right to pass. Sir William Harcourt replied that this argument would do away with the right of public meeting, and spoke strongly in favour of Sir Charles Russell's motion. Professor Stuart asked the House to accept that motion, and to add Mr. Bradlaugh's to it. On a division, Mr. Bradlaugh's motion was rejected by 322 to 207; and Sir Charles Russell's by 316 to 224. In the latter division Sir Charles Russell's motion was supported by Mr. Gladstone, Sir W. Harcourt, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Stansfeld, Sir Lyon Playfair, Sir George Trevelyan, Mr. H. Fowler, Mr. Childers, and Mr. Mundella. Of the Dissident Liberals Mr. Caine and Mr. R. Chamberlain voted for it, and Lord Hartington, Sir Henry James and Mr. Collings against it.

A striking illustration of the changed temper of the House of Commons, since even the Liberal Parliament of 1880, was given in the reception of a Bill introduced by Mr. Bradlaugh to permit affirmations to be made instead of oaths. The Bill simply proposed that persons who had no religious belief, or whose religious belief forbade them to take an oath, should be permitted to affirm. There was an outburst of antiquated prejudice, of course, and Mr. Stanley Leighton moved to refer it to a Select Committee, but was defeated by 247 to 137. The second reading was carried by 250 to 150. The Bill was afterwards passed, but it only got through the Lords during the autumnal sitting.

Mr. Goschen's Bill for the Conversion of the National Debt came on for second reading on the 16th of March. His scheme was briefly one for reducing the Three per Cent. Stocks to two and three-quarters per cent., and at the end of fifteen years to two and a half per cent. The Stocks consisted of £323,000,000 of "Consols," £166,000,000 of "New Threes," and £69,000,000 of

"Reduced." Four years earlier Mr. Childers had offered £108 of the two and a half per cent. stock for every hundred pounds of three per cent. ; and offered it in vain. Mr. Goschen offered a premium of a quarter per cent., or five shillings for each hundred pounds, and it was taken. On the "Consols" and "Reduced" a commission was given to the bankers or the brokers of eighteenpence per cent. This was the only point in the scheme to which serious objection was made, Mr. Henry Fowler proposing in Committee to strike it out. He was supported by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Childers, and Sir William Harcourt, but, on division, was defeated by 244 to 127. The Bill received the Royal Assent on the 27th of March, and on the 12th of April Mr. Goschen announced that of £558,000,000 of debt the reduction had been accepted on £450,000,000. In July, only £40,000,000 remained, and he was empowered to pay off the amount during the succeeding year.

The Budget was brought in on the 26th of March. Mr. Goschen's estimate of the year's income had been exceeded by £1,454,000, while the year's outgoings were less than he had allowed for by £422,650. The Estimates for the new financial year were for an Expenditure of £86,909,944, and for Receipts amounting to £89,287,000. If, therefore, the existing taxation was continued, there was an estimated surplus—that is, a prospective income in excess of the prospective outlay—of £2,377,056. Here was an opportunity for the reduction of taxation ; but it could not be taken without great re-adjustments. A new system of Local Government was to be one of the great measures of the year ; and the country gentlemen must be propitiated for the loss of their monopoly of rural administration by a large relief of their local rates from the Imperial Exchequer. These demands, as Mr. Goschen said, wrought havoc and devastation upon his balance. He had, therefore, to put into his Imperial Budget two local Budgets, one for the coming year and one for the future. The permanent scheme would not come into operation till the 1st of April, 1889,



when the sum of £2,852,434 paid out of the taxes as subventions to Local Authorities for police, roads, lunatics, medical officers, criminal prosecutions, and other objects, would be withdrawn. In place of this sum, there would be given to the Local Authorities the Intoxicating Liquor Licences, with power to increase them, and the Game Dealers' Licences, together £1,378,143. Then there would be handed over another sum of £1,591,730, being the proceeds of licences of beer dealers, spirit dealers, wine dealers, and other tradesmen, the dog, gun, and game licences, and the carriage tax. These sums, together with £1,800,000 from the probate duties, and £826,000 new duties to be given to Local Authorities, raised the Local Budget to £5,595,873; out of which the Local Authorities would have to pay for the matters included in the discontinued subventions, and fourpence per head per day for the cost of indoor paupers, amounting to £1,200,000, a total outlay of £4,585,311. Mr. Goschen proposed to get the £826,000 new duties by a tax of one pound on every vehicle over ten hundredweight, and a wheel tax of half-a-crown a wheel on every vehicle over two hundredweight. Then he would put a duty of one pound on every pleasure horse, and of five pounds on every racehorse, but horse dealers would pay a composition of fifteen pounds. So far as these arrangements bore on the financial year beginning on the 1st of April, the Local Authorities would get £826,000 from these new duties and £1,150,000 as their share of the Imperial taxation on personalty, which would be disposed of thus: the Boards of Guardians, fourpence a head for indoor paupers, £1,200,000; Highway and County Authorities, for roads, £520,000; and London and Quarter Sessions Boroughs, for roads, £256,000. The net increase of the grants in aid of rates, or, in other words, of the burdens taken off property and put upon the people's back, was £1,716,000.

The Local Budget arrangements reduced the surplus on the Imperial Budget to £1,252,000. Ten shillings per

cent. added to the Succession Duty, bringing that impost up to one and a half per cent., would yield for the year £50,000. Increased stringency of collection was reckoned to give another £50,000; a tax on the nominal value of securities to bearer of a shilling per cent., £200,000; the raising of the tax on contract notes from one penny to sixpence, £50,000; an *ad valorem* duty of one pound per thousand on the nominal capital of new limited companies or new issues of old ones, £110,000; and a tax of five shillings a dozen on bottled wine, £125,000. These six items made together £585,000 of new taxes. Mr. Goschen then had a surplus of £1,837,000, which he disposed of first by income tax allowances to agriculturists who farm their own land without profit, £20,000; revision of carriage tax, £30,000; abolition of hawkers' licences, £25,000; and a penny off the income tax, reducing it to sixpence, £1,550,000. This made the whole Revenue of the year—after deducting £1,400,000 as the share of the Local Authorities in the increased succession duty—£86,827,000, against an expenditure of £86,614,944, leaving an estimated surplus of £212,056.

The Bill for imposing the Wheel and Van Taxes created a great agitation all over the country. Even Tory candidates at by-elections were compelled to pledge themselves to vote against it; and at length it had to be withdrawn. The Government, however, clung to their absurd scheme to the last moment. It was objected to as a new tax on locomotion, as an endeavour to transfer to trade and to industry one of the burdens which rest on property, and as taxing the dwellers in towns for the benefit of landowners in the country. It was kept before the country all the summer, and was only reluctantly withdrawn on the 29th of November. On the second reading of the Budget Bill, on the 23rd of April, Mr. Gladstone moved that the duties accruing upon Deaths should be so fixed as to equalize the charge upon real and personal property. "What is the gain of the landed interest," he asked,

“under the present budget? The landlord will get the benefit of the whole contributions which we are going to make to the rates in the rural districts. But when will he get it? He will get it very quickly indeed. If rents were rising, he would not get it. . . . If we are to consider rents in a declining state, the full benefit of these subventions must go at once, or very shortly, to the landlord. Let me take as an illustration a farm rented at £300 a year, with rates at £60. On the day before the Budget the tenant applies to me, as landlord, for a reduction of the rent, and makes an offer of £200. On hearing the following day of the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I find that the rates on the farm will be very considerably reduced, from £60 to £40. I say to the tenant, ‘This is very hard on me. However, you calculate the rates at £60, they will now be £40. That being so, your offer is evidently of £220 a year.’” Speaking of the owner of visible personalty, Mr. Gladstone said: “The owner of visible personalty will be called upon to pay under the death duties three times as much as is levied on the landed proprietor. How long will this continue?” “It depends,” he said, “upon Liberal politicians who take the name of Unionists. It will be their crime, not the crime of the Government.” Lord Hartington replied that, not for the sake of asserting a great principle could he deal a blow at a combination of measures which he believed would effect a very salutary reform. Mr. Gladstone’s amendment was rejected by 312 to 219; and 47 Dissentients voted in the majority against it.

While these financial questions were before the House there were some important interludes. Mr. Labouchere’s motion against hereditary legislators was discussed on the 9th of March, and rejected by 223 to 162, a decrease of four supporters and an increase of twenty-one opponents as compared with the Parliament of 1885. On the same day, in the House of Lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Derby, Lord Dunraven, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Rothschild,



Lord Monkswell, Lord Sandhurst, Lord Thring, and five other peers, were named as members of the Committee on Sweating, which it had been resolved to appoint, on the motion of Lord Dunraven seconded by Lord Sandhurst, ten days before. On the 19th, Lord Rosebery moved for a Committee on the constitution of the House of Lords, and made a very able speech, which much impressed the peers themselves, and might have impressed the country, but that Mr. Ritchie, on the same night, introduced the Local Government Bill in the House of Commons. The motion was opposed by Lord Salisbury on the ground of its vagueness. "The Committee," he said, "are to consider the constitution of this House much as a doctor might be asked to examine the body of some diseased patient carried to a hospital." Lord Granville, who said that for thirty years he had been in favour of life peerages, supported the motion, but it was rejected by 97 to 50. Later in the Session Lord Salisbury himself introduced a Bill for the creation of a few Life Peers and the expulsion of members who had discredited the House. It was read a second time and then dropped. Mr. Parnell's Arrears of Rent Bill came on for second reading in the House of Commons on the 21st of March. The Government, under the new Irish Land Bill, had, in December, 1887, reduced the judicial rents all over Ireland from two to twenty per cent., the average being fourteen per cent. The reduction took effect on 114,647 rents, and amounted to £360,000. The landlords raised a great outcry, and declared that they should have done quite as well under the Plan of Campaign. The Government, however, persisted in their refusal to apply the same principle to the arrears of the rents thus officially declared to be exorbitant, though it had been applied by the Crofters Act to Scotland. Mr. Parnell's Bill was rejected by 330 to 245, though seven of the Dissident Liberals joined their old friends in voting for it.

The Local Government Scheme was introduced by Mr. Ritchie on the 19th of March. There were two Bills, one

fixing the qualification and providing for the registration of County Council electors, the other establishing the County Council itself and defining its powers. Taking the two Bills as practically one measure, they may be described as the application to the counties of the principles which a great Liberal Administration had applied to the boroughs fifty years before, Household Suffrage, "one man one vote," and equal electoral districts. The Liberal scheme of County Government is that all the powers enjoyed by the towns shall be given to the rural districts, that every parish, or small group of parishes, shall have a parish council with full governing powers, and that these parish councils shall be federated under the County Council. Mr. Ritchie's Bill adopted the principle of extending municipal institutions to the counties, but did not carry it out. It contained a scheme for the establishment of District Councils instead of Parish Councils, and left the vestries unreformed. It made in the County Council a very near approach to a really popular local government, but so far as the rural districts were concerned, it gave the Council very limited governing powers—the police, for example, were put under a joint Committee of the Council and the Magistrates, and the appointment of Chief Constable was given exclusively to the Court of Quarter Sessions. The Councils were, indeed, to have a new power not contemplated before and a new source of revenue. They were to collect and use the Licensing duties, and to be the Licensing authorities. Each Council was to divide its county into licensing districts, and to appoint a Licensing Committee. These committees were to have power to close the public-houses on Sundays, Good Fridays, and Christmas Days, and, subject to an appeal to the magistrates and to the County Council as a whole, to refuse to renew a licence. If this refusal was confirmed, the County Council was to compensate the holder of the licence, and to get money for this purpose it might increase the Licence duties twenty per cent. The Bill applied to London, though Mr. Ritchie said he did

not regard it as a complete scheme of London government. The City was therefore left unreformed, and the London County Council was to supersede the Metropolitan Board of Works, which had been utterly discredited, and was swept away. In a future measure the Vestries and District Boards of London were to be superseded by District Councils with large administrative powers. The financial arrangements I have already described in giving an account of Mr. Goschen's Budget.

The Bill was received with warmer approval on the Liberal side of the House than by the Tory party. Mr. Gladstone said that the Government founded their proposals upon principles which were broad and deep, and which claimed favourable consideration. Major Rasch, the Tory member for South East Essex, pronounced it "absolutely unworkable and thoroughly valueless." *The Daily News* said it was "a large, comprehensive, and important scheme." *The Standard* said: "The whole Bill has been framed in too ambitious a spirit, and aims at more than it has any fair prospect of accomplishing." At the annual meeting of the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation on the 11th of April, resolutions were passed especially approving the democratic basis on which the Bill rested, but disapproving of the proposals that the Council should select a body of Aldermen, that casual vacancies were to be filled by the Council itself, and that a property qualification was required for the Chairman. The strongest objections were, that the Police were not left wholly to the Council, and that the Licensing Clauses ignored the right of direct control by the inhabitants, and created a vested interest not hitherto recognized by law. The Committee urged that the administration of the Poor Law should be given to the Councils, that the reform of the parish should be the basis of County government, that the London County Council should have control of the Police, and that Ireland should be included. A protest against the subsidy from the Probate Duty as "intended to relieve the landed



interest of its just share of public burdens," and a demand for an improved method of administering justice, completed the criticisms of the Federation on the Bill.

The second reading was moved on the 12th of April, and Mr. Stansfeld opened the discussion in a speech of careful criticism, accepting the Bill, but pointing out the defects the Liberal party would endeavour to amend. A great blot in the Bill was the entire omission of the Poor Law system from it; and no measure could be satisfactory which did not take the parish as the unit, and begin by making the people interested in the administration of their parish affairs. At a later stage of the debate Mr. Chamberlain asked that County Councils should have full control of the Police, and Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Caine strongly objected to the Licensing clauses. Sir Edward Clarke assured the House that it was not competent to the justices at Brewster Sessions to refuse the renewal of a licence, except for reasons personal to the holder of it. The Acts of 1873 and 1874 gave to a licensed victualler, he said, a vested interest in his licence, and it was upon that principle the Licensing clauses of the Bill had been framed. The Bill was read a second time on the 20th of April without a division. When the first half of the scheme, the County Electors Bill, went into Committee on the 3rd of May, Mr. Stansfeld moved an instruction abolishing the plural vote for Guardians, but was defeated by 216 to 130. In Committee, Mr. Ambrose, the Tory member for the Harrow Division of Middlesex, proposed to give votes to owners of houses as well as to occupiers, but was defeated by 259 to 52. Mr. Stanley Leighton, another Tory member, moved that only those who paid their own rates should vote, but did not go to a division. This County Electors Bill was read a third time on the tenth of May.

Before the Local Government Bill got into Committee an immense agitation sprang up against the Licensing clauses. Mr. Caine published a statement showing the enormous increase in the value of a house that the mere

grant of a licence made, and asked whether, having first given it for nothing, the public were to pay heavily for withdrawing it. He showed that on an average the County Councils would have to pay nearly £3,000 for each public-house they discontinued, and reckoned that the proposals in the Bill were equivalent to an endowment of more than £200,000,000 for the public-house owners. Sir Wilfrid Lawson said that the Courts had decided that the Licensing authority had the same power to refuse the renewal of the licence that it had to refuse to grant it at first; that the grant was for a year only, with no obligation to continue it longer, and that this decision of the Courts was now, in the test case of *Sharp versus Wakefield*, before the Court of Appeal. The Government were, therefore, asking the House of Commons to anticipate the final and authoritative statement of the existing law, by making a new law which would give every publican a vested interest in his licence. The agitation which this monstrous proposal caused, and the stir created by the proposed Van and Wheel Tax, filled the early summer and the Whitsuntide holidays. There was a great procession of carts and waggons in London against the one, and a vast demonstration and meeting in Hyde Park against the other. All over the country the friends of temperance, the religious organizations, and the political clubs were up in arms against Public House Endowment.

The subject was prominent in two by-elections which happened just at this period. There was a vacancy in Mid Lanark, in which the Government had high hopes of winning a Liberal seat. Mr. J. Wynford Philipps was the Liberal candidate, and he was opposed, not only by a Tory, but by Mr. Keir Hardie, in the supposed interests of labour. The ballot took place on the 27th of April, and Mr. Philipps defeated Mr. Bousfield, his Tory competitor, by 3,847 to 2,917, increasing the Liberal majority by 60 votes, in spite of 617 which had been carried away by Mr. Keir Hardie. But the fate of the Licensing clauses was

probably decided by the Southampton election on the 23rd of May. The Tory candidate whose retirement caused the vacancy in that borough, had been returned in 1885 by a majority of 741, and again in 1886 by a majority of 342. The Liberal candidate, Mr. F. W. Evans, was in the United States, and the writ was moved for at the earliest possible moment, so that the election might take place in his absence. But Mr. Evans was efficiently represented by his wife, who had the active and energetic assistance of Lady Harcourt, Lady Anne Blunt, Miss Cobden, Mrs. Bateson, and other ladies, as well as that of Mr. R. K. Causton, M.P., Mr. Sullivan, M.P., Mr. Mahony, M.P., Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, and Mr. Reginald Wilberforce. Mr. Evans was returned by 5,151 votes to 4,266 for Mr. A. E. Guest, the Tory candidate. A minority of 342 was thus turned into a majority of 885. On the next day Sir William Harcourt was present at a great popular reception which was given to Mr. Evans on his arrival from New York. Sir William Harcourt pointed the moral of the Liberal victory by saying, "I believe that this election has inflicted—I hope it has—a fatal blow upon the iniquitous Compensation clauses. Here is one issue. The other issue is that of justice to Ireland. You have had among you some of the most distinguished representatives of Ireland. You have had Mr. Pierce Mahony; you have had Mr. Sullivan, one of the prisoners of Mr. Balfour; you have had my friend Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, another prisoner of Mr. Balfour's. Therefore the issue of justice to Ireland has been distinctly raised."

In both these elections the Irish question greatly influenced if it did not wholly determine the result. In the fortnight which preceded the Mid Lanark election there were three important debates on Irish matters. Mr. Parnell moved the adjournment of the House on the 12th of April, to call attention to the violent dispersion of a lawful meeting at Ennis, by a cavalry charge, on the preceding Sunday, by Colonel Turner. Mr. Balfour defended the officials



as usual, but in a tone unusually apologetic, and the House by 249 to 179 refused to interfere. On the 24th Mr. Justin McCarthy called attention to a new kind of procedure alarming to those who look for the old customs of the courts and the established methods of the judges. Mr. McCarthy said that there had suddenly sprung up in Ireland the practice of increasing sentences on appeal. The exemplary parish priest, Father McFadden, sentenced to three months imprisonment, had appealed against it, and the sentence was increased to six months. The Member for North Armagh, Mr. Blane, sentenced to four months imprisonment, was given six months when he appealed. At Galway, three men, who appealed against a sentence of six weeks imprisonment, had the six weeks increased to four months. At Ennis, Mr. O'Flanagan, who had been sentenced to three months imprisonment, had the sentence raised to six months hard labour as the result of his appeal. "I am certain," said Mr. McCarthy, "that the people of England will say, 'This is not what we understood by the privilege of appeal.'" The Attorney General for Ireland said the county court judges "could confirm, vary, or reverse" sentences appealed against, and that included increasing them. Mr. Shaw Lefevre said the exercise of this power was altogether new, and it was most significant that three county court judges, almost on the same day, had thus increased sentences. Sir William Harcourt pointed out that Mr. Balfour had begun his policy with regard to appeals by an act of bad faith to the House. He had made a solemn pledge that there should be an appeal in every case, and had not given it. The House could conceive that it might be convenient to make people afraid to appeal, and so to introduce this new practice into the proceedings, as a hint that those who did appeal might get their sentences doubled. Mr. Balfour said, "If it is true, as is not denied by any lawyer in the House, that the county court judges in Ireland have thrown upon them a statutory obligation to rehear these cases—if they find themselves dealing

with cases about which a vast amount of party and political excitement has been raised in Ireland, and has been attempted to be raised in England—if they find that the Court of First Instance consisted of gentlemen who had been the subjects of the most violent and monstrous attacks, not only in Ireland and the Irish Press, but in England and the English Press, if they find themselves obliged, under these circumstances, to rehear cases of men who have committed offences of the gravest kind, is it to be said that they exceed their powers if they modify the sentences in certain cases in excess of those originally given?" This astounding admission of political and vindictive motives in the judges or in the authorities who inspired them, this intimation that sentences were increased by the county court judges in consequence of attacks in the Press upon the Resident Magistrates, who had given the sentences appealed against, revealed the whole spirit of Mr. Balfour's Irish administration. Mr. Gladstone replied with fervid indignation. The power of appeal, he said, had been given in the interest of the person who had received the sentence. "It was asked for on his behalf, it was given as a concession to him, it was stamped on it that Parliament intended it to be a gift to him, and it has now been wantonly and cruelly used against him." The case, he said, illustrated Mr. Balfour's whole method of dealing with appeals. After pointing out that an appeal in every case was promised, but only in sentences of over a month was it granted, Mr. Gladstone referred to the case mentioned before (page 306). Mr. Gladstone said, "The first attempt made to evade and nullify the power of appeal was by the passing of cumulative sentences—a trick of the meanest character, the dishonour and discredit of which I will not attempt to divide between the Government and the authorities in Ireland. But I say, looking at the transaction, anything more mean and miserable, more worthy of the contempt of every honest man, and almost of every dishonest man, could not be conceived. Power of appeal was given in case of

sentences exceeding a month, and two sentences of one month apiece were passed together, so that the person sentenced should be imprisoned for two months, and not have the power of appeal. It is a part of the melancholy history of this statute, and of the administration of this statute." The House declined to interfere by 219 to 165.

One of the most important debates of the Session occurred at the Wednesday sitting on the next day. Mr. Carew moved the second reading of a Bill for creating Local Governments in Ireland, on the pattern set by the English Bill; and Lord Randolph Churchill made a very striking speech. Mr. Gladstone had spoken in support of the Bill, Mr. Balfour had declared it to be "inopportune," Lord Randolph Churchill, speaking in support of the immediate extension of Local Government to Ireland, referred to the pledges he had given for the Government in his speech in the debate on the Address in August, 1886. He said

The declaration I made at that table was, so far as it related to Ireland, a written declaration. Every sentence of it—I might almost go so far as to say almost every word—represented the opinions of the Government, and had been submitted to, and assented to, by the Prime Minister and the Chief Secretary for Ireland of that day. More than that, that declaration I made with regard to Ireland—I recollect it as well as if I made it yesterday—I made without one dissentient voice, and without one dissentient murmur being raised among the honourable gentlemen who belonged to the Tory party. More than that, I was given to understand in the plainest way that the declaration of the Government thus made received the full and entire approval of the leaders of the Unionist party. If I dwell upon these matters, it is because upon this point—which I fear is likely to raise some difference of opinion before long, if it does not now,—the idea of the Government at that time was, that Local Government in Ireland—a certain just extension within reasonable limits—was to be looked on as a remedy for all these great evils which have been alluded to by the Chief Secretary. I venture to say this: that if those who are on this side of the House will carry back their minds to the terrible struggle we all had to fight in 1886,—one in which I may, without egotism, claim to have borne no inconsiderable part,—there is not a single member of the Unionist party who would, under the stress of that struggle, have stood upon an English platform and taken up the line on the extension of Local Government in Ireland, which has been assumed by speakers



representing the Unionist party this afternoon. Sir, I feel certain there are none (murmurs), well there may be a few. It fell to my lot to watch very closely the course of that election, and the attitude taken up by members of the Tory party at the time ; and I do recollect that the pledges given by the Unionist party were large and liberal, were distinct and full, and that there was no reservation with regard to those pledges, with respect to the defects which have been pointed out this afternoon, in Irish character and Irish unfitness for local government. Nothing of the kind. We pledged ourselves that we would, at the very earliest opportunity, extend to Ireland the same amount of local liberty which we extended to England. I venture to say,—and I do not care how much I am contradicted, or what the consequences may be—I venture to say, that that was the foundation of the Unionist party ; and I venture to say more, that is the only platform on which you can resist Repeal. . . . The words I used were the words, “similarity, equality, simultaneity,” so far as the respective circumstances of the two countries might admit. The time has gone by altogether when I will consent any longer to bear solely that responsibility. . . . It often happens that I am asked to go down into the country and address audiences, and when I go down I never lose an opportunity of telling the people, to the best of my ability, that it is the intention of the Tory party and the Unionist party to legislate largely and liberally for the removal of Irish grievances. (Cheers.) Yes, but I claim a specific interpretation on that point. I look for a *bonâ fide* and prompt interpretation, and although honourable members did not in the least object to my winning appeals at great mass meetings in the country, there seems to be considerable difference when I carry those opinions to a practical conclusion.

Lord Randolph Churchill left the House without voting. Mr. Chamberlain came to the rescue of the Government, declaring that he should vote against the Bill with a light heart, but he did not understand it to be voting in favour of an indefinite postponement of the question. Mr. John Morley said that Mr. W. H. Smith’s declarations elsewhere amounted to indefinite postponement, and Mr. W. H. Smith in concluding the debate said, “I say again, most distinctly, that the course I advocated is a course absolutely consistent with the statement of my right honourable friend (Lord Randolph Churchill). There is no engagement which I and the Government entered into, from which we retire to the extent of a single tittle.” Mr. Smith’s speech was cut

short by Mr. Parnell, at Mr. Biggar's suggestion, moving the closure. The closure was agreed to, and the House divided, rejecting Mr. Carew's Bill by 282 to 195, two Liberal Dissentients voting for it and 36 against it.

Mr. William O'Brien and Mr. Dillon had both been arrested in the week before this discussion took place. In the succeeding week a Bill for providing Colonel King-Harman, the new Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland, with a salary, was read a second time after a good deal of discussion. When the appointment was made in 1887, the excuse for giving Mr. Balfour an assistant was that it would cost nothing, as Colonel King-Harman would not have a salary. The Bill was therefore regarded by some supporters of the Government as a breach of faith, and when it got into committee, on the 14th of May, Mr. Heneage moved that the Under Secretary's salary should be deducted from those of the Chief Secretary and the Lord Lieutenant. The vote was 183 for this proposal and 191 against it, a narrow majority of eight for a Bill which Sir William Harcourt fitly described as a flagrant and scandalous Tory job. Colonel King-Harman died suddenly on the tenth of June, and no more was heard of the proposal to pay another person to share the Chief Secretary's work.

The by-play of political and parliamentary life went on all this time as busily as ever. On the 11th of April Sir Walter Foster entertained Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, and Sir George Trevelyan to dinner at the National Liberal Club, and Mr. Gladstone, in a survey of the political field, said that though the Liberal party was maimed and mutilated, the by-elections of fifteen months had shown more victories or more advances at the polls than any party in a minority had ever done before. Mr. Balfour, speaking on the same night to the National Union of Conservative Associations, vindicated his Irish administration by contending that his predecessors had done the same. "These people accuse us of crime for doing what they did two years

ago. Then let them confess that they were guilty of crime, when they did the things that we are doing now." But they had not done the things Mr. Balfour was doing now. They had not treated political prisoners as criminals, and that treatment made the whole difference. Mr. John Morley, in a speech at Darwen, on the 18th of April, said Mr. Balfour's treatment of the Irish members was like the easy contempt of a white man for the negroes of a cotton plantation. On the same day, Lord Hartington was presented with the freedom of the City of London, and, in his speech, contended that the Irish people had, through intimidation, placed their civil rights in the hands of self-constituted dictators. Mr. Goschen was speaking at Croydon, defending his Budget, and intimating that the aspect of European affairs was not peaceful. "It does not appear to me," he said, "that we are living under a cloudless sky." On the eighth of May Mr. Parnell was the guest of the Eighty Club, and spoke of the Papal Rescript, then just issued, which condemned the Plan of Campaign; with which he had had nothing to do. But for an illness which rendered it impossible for him to be consulted, he should have advised against it. Mr. Gladstone, on the next day, spoke at a great meeting at the Memorial Hall, where an address of sympathy with his Home Rule and Anti-Coercion policy was presented to him, signed by 3,730 Nonconformist ministers. Mr. Gladstone reviewed the policy of the Government in Ireland, and traced the steps by which, in refusing all aid to the tenants in 1886 and the beginning of 1887, the Government had been the real authors of the Plan of Campaign. The seventh of June was the anniversary of the rejection two years before of the Home Rule Bill, and Mr. John Morley, presiding over a great meeting, held by the London Liberal and Radical Union in St. James's Hall, to protest against Mr. Balfour's administration of Irish affairs, opened his speech by an allusion to it. Referring to a meeting of Dissentients, two nights before, he said, "They tell us we are in the wilderness. There are other places besides the



wilderness. We will make the best of it. We will fight our way through no more Round Tables. We know their calculation. It was described by Mr. Gladstone himself. He said, "They are playing against an old man's life." Speaking of the Papal Rescript against the Plan of Campaign, he said, "I confess that when I first saw that document I had some apprehensions that it might inflict a temporary check upon the National movement. That impression was a complete mistake." In the next week Mr. Parnell and the Irish members gave a dinner to their colleagues who had suffered under the Coercion Act, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Edward Harrington, Mr. Hooper, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Sheehy, and Mr. Gilhooly. Mr. Dillon, who spoke with a brutal sentence of six months imprisonment hanging over him, said that Irish members were elected not only for the purpose of attending the House of Commons, but for showing the way to prison to the Irish people. He, too, referred to the reception of the Papal Rescript in Ireland, and said it could not now be contended that Home Rule meant Rome Rule. Sir William Harcourt, in a great speech at Derby on the 20th of June, and another at Stockport on the 21st, effectively carried on the campaign against the Government.

The smaller legislative proposals of the Session suffered by the perpetual recurrence of Irish questions. The small but valuable measure of social reform, which the House of Commons repeatedly passes and the House of Lords constantly rejects, the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, was read a second time on the 18th of April, by 239 to 182, but got no farther. A Women's Suffrage Bill was rejected by the House of Lords without debate or division. On the 24th two Tithe Bills were read a second time in the House of Lords. These Bills were chiefly intended to meet the Tithe Agitation in Wales, where the farmers were protesting against an exaction which seemed to them to be oppressive and ruinous. Rents were being everywhere reduced, and the farmers asked for a similar reduction in the tithe. At Meifod, in Montgomeryshire, some farmers,

in the Spring of 1887, asked the Dean and Chapter of Christchurch, Oxford, for ten per cent. reduction. It was refused, and the tenants declined to pay the tithe. The college authorities distrained, but at one of the farms 1,500 people assembled, and set the sheriff and the police at defiance. All the year through there were similar scenes here and there. In January, 1888, a troop of Hussars was sent off to Flintshire, and the mysterious terrors of the law of conspiracy were invoked to overcome popular opposition to an obnoxious impost. In some English counties, too, there was a movement for the reduction of the tithe; and everywhere the clergy complained that their demands were no longer met with the same promptitude and willingness as before. Lord Salisbury's scheme for removing the discontent was to make the landlord pay the tithe, leaving him to get it from the tenant. His reply to the request for reduction was, to charge it on an average calculated on three years prices instead of seven. Both Bills were passed by the Lords, but were dropped in the Commons. On the first of May Dr. Clark called attention to the failure of the Crofters Act, and was met by a promise, which Mr. Chamberlain thought unsatisfactory, that an emigration scheme should be tried. Mr. Bradlaugh moved a resolution which Mr. M. Ferguson seconded, for giving local authorities power to acquire waste lands, and to let them for cultivation, but it was talked out. On the next day Sir John Lubbock's Bill for compulsory early closing of shops, and for empowering local authorities to institute weekly half-holidays was defeated by 278 to 95. The National Defence Bill, which was read a second time on the tenth of May, was a small measure providing for the mobilization of the defensive forces, and giving power to the Government for the requisition of vessels and carriages, and the use of the railways in emergency. It passed without discussion. The Imperial Defence Bill, which had been prepared for by some alarmist statements of Lord Wolseley, which he afterwards explained away, was based on resolutions moved by Mr. Smith, on the 15th of

May. The first resolution ratifying the agreement with the Australasian Colonies come to at the Colonial Conference, was carried by 85 to 37. The second, which was for £850,000 for the arming and building of vessels, to be spread over ten years, was opposed by Mr. Waddy and Mr. Childers, on the ground that the year's outlay should be paid out of the year's income; and by Mr. Labouchere, who said the history of Conservative finance was that Conservatives spent money and Liberals had to pay it. The vote was carried by 92 to 48. On the further motion to grant £2,600,000 for the defence of ports and coaling stations, there was a long debate. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman protested against the vicious method of spreading the vote over future years, tying the hands, Mr. Illingworth said, of future Parliaments, but the spendthrift policy was adopted by 216 against 136; and, later in the Session, the Bill was passed.

The Local Government Bill got into Committee on the seventh of June, after Mr. F. S. Stevenson had moved an Instruction, reforming the parish vestries, which was defeated by 231 to 185. In Committee Mr. Asquith proposed to allow any person to be eligible for election as County Councillor, and was only defeated by 247 to 210. Mr. Seale-Hayne, Liberal member for the Ashburton division of Devonshire, proposed to allow clergymen of any denomination to be eligible. Mr. Ritchie accepted the amendment, and thus removed a needless and invidious disqualification. Mr. Hobhouse, the Dissident Liberal member for East Somerset, by the consent of the Government, introduced a property qualification, by allowing persons to be candidates who are on the Parliamentary register as owners of property in the division. Mr. Stansfeld moved that all the Councillors should be Elective, thus abolishing the anomaly of County Aldermen, and was supported by 215 against 252. At this stage in the discussion, it was announced in the daily papers on the ninth, that the Licensing clauses would be withdrawn.



On Monday, the 11th, Mr. Summers asked whether these announcements were true, and Mr. W. H. Smith said the Government had come to no decision of the kind. On the next day Mr. Ritchie unconditionally withdrew the clauses. Mr. Arthur Acland proposed to encourage poor men to become County Councillors, by allowing reasonable travelling expenses in going to and from the meetings of the Council. Mr. W. H. Smith saw the importance of the proposal, and asked for time, but on second thoughts the Government opposed it, and it was defeated by 244 to 201, twenty-eight Dissentients voting against it, and only eight for it. Mr. Heneage moved to give the Councils the appointment of Chief Constables and the control of the county police, but was defeated by 266 to 220. This vote was taken on Friday the 15th of June, the day of the election for the Ayr boroughs. This Scottish vacancy was caused by the death of Mr. R. F. Campbell, a Dissident Liberal, who had defeated Captain Sinclair, the Liberal candidate in 1886, by 2,673 to 1,498. For this apparently safe Dissident Liberal seat, Mr. Evelyn Ashley was the Government candidate; and Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain wrote letters in his favour in reply to one which Mr. Gladstone had written for Mr. John Sinclair, the Liberal candidate. The sudden abandonment of the Licensing proposals, three days before the poll, was probably due to the belief which the Ministerialists professed, that their defeat at Southampton was due to those proposals. But, as at Southampton, some of Mr. Balfour's Irish prisoners had been enthusiastically welcomed by the people; so, Mr. Dillon, then actually under a sentence which everybody felt to be iniquitous, had been welcomed at Ayr, and brought home to multitudes of generous men the brutal character of Mr. Balfour's rule. They had not voted for this Coercion, when they gave a majority of 1,175 to the Dissident Liberal in 1886, and they voted against it now, returning Mr. Sinclair by 2,321 to 2,268, a Liberal majority of 53.

The new member took his seat on the 19th of June, and

on that day Mr. John Morley moved to take away from Quarter Sessions the appointment, control, and dismissal of the Chief Constable, and carried it by 248 against 218. The Bill was before the House of Commons for a month after this division. When the proposal to withdraw the Licensing clauses came on Sir William Harcourt, Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Labouchere proposed to retain the clause which gave the County Councils the right to close the public-houses on Sundays, Good Fridays and Christmas days, but the Government persisted and the clause was omitted by 275 to 213, fifty-two Dissident Liberals swelling the majority. When the London clauses were under consideration, Mr. Rowlands proposed that there should be no Aldermen, but was defeated by 194 to 150, the Dissident Liberals contributing thirty-four to the majority of fifty. The more important amendment of Professor Stuart by which the County Council would have had the control of the London Police, was defeated by 222 to 152. Mr. Channing proposed to insert a clause empowering the occupier of a house to deduct one half of his rates from his rent, but it was rejected by 231 votes against 176. An amendment of Mr. Stansfeld's assimilating the County Council to the Municipal Councils in the election of a Chairman every year, was accepted by the Government. The Bill passed eventually in a form very much less useful and popular than the Liberal party desired to give it, but their efforts in committee distinctly improved it, and some of their defeated proposals were afterwards incorporated in the Liberal programme. Mr. Ritchie never found time, nor the Government inclination, to produce the District Councils Bill.

A striking illustration of the character of Mr. Balfour's magistrates was given in an appeal which was heard in the Dublin Court of Exchequer on the 20th of June. Mr. David Barry, Mr. Thomas Heapy, Mr. D. Lynch and Mr. Thomas Barry, shop keepers at Killeagh, were brought before Mr. H. E. Redmond and Mr. J. C. Gardiner,

Resident Magistrates, on the charge of criminal conspiracy not to deal with certain members of the Royal Irish Constabulary. The first was sent to prison for a fortnight and the other three for a month, and the Magistrates refused to state a case for the opinion of a higher court. A conditional order for a habeas corpus was then obtained, but the Crown opposed its being made absolute. The Lord Chief Baron in delivering judgment said that he did not find one shadow of evidence of conspiracy. Indeed in the case of Mr. David Barry he said the evidence was that Barry was intimidated, but he could not see how that was evidence that Barry was intimidating others. "It was mistaking the injured party for the person who was doing the wrongful act." Baron Dowse said there were several things he could never understand, and one of these was the minds of local justices and how they brought their minds to bear upon a case. Mr. Justice Andrews said he agreed with the Lord Chief Baron that there was absolutely no evidence to sustain the conviction. Mr. David Barry, however, had already served his fortnight's imprisonment; and the three others had been more than a fortnight in Cork jail.

On the day on which this striking decision was given, Mr. Kisbey, the County Court Judge at Dundalk, confirmed the sentence of six months' imprisonment passed on Mr. Dillon by Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Rayner on the 11th of May. Mr. Dillon had been accompanied to the court by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Professor Stuart, Mr. Charles Schwann, Mr. J. Edward Ellis, Mr. Rowntree and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt. Of course the sentence was confirmed, and Professor Stuart then presented Mr. Dillon with an address signed by 150 English, Scotch and Welsh members of Parliament. Mr. Dillon was conveyed to Dundalk prison and made to wear the prison clothes, but the doctor sent him to the infirmary. Protests against his cruel sentence sprang up on all sides. Meetings were held and resolutions passed in all parts of the kingdom. Speaking at a meeting of the Home Counties Division of the National Liberal



Federation on the next day Lord Rosebery said the British democracy when once it felt its legs would never tolerate such incidents of government as the imprisonment of Mr. Dillon. The whole meeting cheered for Mr. Dillon, and Lord Rosebery continued, "Mr. Dillon is in prison to-day, but I greatly doubt if he would exchange his dungeon for any palace in the land . . . his imprisonment is doing more to forward the cause of Irish autonomy than he could do even by his eloquence outside the prison walls." The impression on the public mind made by Mr. Dillon's imprisonment was so great that the Government were alarmed. He was not treated unkindly in prison, and in September he was released.

A motion was brought forward by Mr. John Morley on the 25th of June, declaring that "the operation of the Crimes Act and the manner of its administration, undermine respect for law, estrange the minds of the people of Ireland, and are deeply injurious to the United Kingdom." There was a great debate which lasted two nights and led to a foregone conclusion. The division was 366 for the Government and 273 against it; 64 Dissident Liberals again supporting all Mr. Balfour's doings. As their numbers were now reduced to 69 only five were absent, of these four were ill—Mr. Bright, Mr. Villiers, Mr. Pitt Lewis and Lord Baring—and one, Sir Edward Watkin, stayed away. All the rest voted not only for Coercion, but for Mr. Balfour's administration of it. On the 29th of June there was an election in the Isle of Thanet to fill the late Colonel King-Harman's seat. In 1885 the Tory majority was 711; in 1886 it was 2,088. Now, Mr. James Lowther the Tory candidate had 3,547 votes to 2,889 given to Mr. Knatchbull Hugessen the Liberal, a majority of 658. Speaking on the next day at a meeting in the studio of Mr. Henry Holiday at Hampstead Mr. Gladstone said that if there was in the country at large a change of opinion at all approaching to that which was taking place in the Isle of Thanet, the next general election was safe. Turning to Ireland Mr. Gladstone discussed the

whole Coercion policy of the Government. "It is now," he said, "erected into a principle, into a system, into an institution, and is as much bound up with the views that the present Government and the majority take as to the government of Ireland, and is as radical an injustice as was bound up in the hateful and now happily nearly extinct system of negro slavery. . . . Mr. Balfour is the organ of the Government; the Government is the organ of the majority; the majority is the organ of the constituencies; and the constituencies are made up of individuals. The individual himself may not have to answer to man, but to God he will certainly have to answer and to bring these things clearly into the light of day. I am satisfied, as I am of my own existence, that they will be rejected and abhorred by a noble and generous nation." On the same day the metropolitan protest against Coercion, and especially against Mr. Dillon's imprisonment, was continued by the holding of thirty great meetings in various parts of London.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*THE PARNELL COMMISSION.*

DURING the early part of the Session of 1888 the Campaign of Calumny seemed to have died away. "Parnellism and Crime" was widely circulated at by-elections, and the Tories and Dissident Liberals continued to make use of the statements *The Times* had made; but the mass of the electors paid no attention to these things. The Irish members of Parliament, against whom the accusations of complicity in crime had been made, were the most popular and welcome missionaries the Liberal party could send to the constituencies. The Liberal victories in Mid Lanark, at Southampton, and in the Ayr boroughs, had been won by their aid, and the Government and its supporters had almost ceased to hope that the public would ever be brought to believe that the conduct of the leaders of the Liberal party, in associating with them was, in Sir Henry James's words, "giving their moral sanction to crime." But in the middle of 1888 the whole controversy blazed up again. Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell, who had sat for Dungarvan in the Parliament of 1880, and made himself conspicuous as an obstructionist, brought an action against *The Times* for libel, and claimed £50,000 damages. He made no preparations for carrying on a great and costly inquiry, and after the case was opened, withdrew from the jury all the charges excepting two harmless passages in which he was personally named. *The Times* pleaded that



Mr. O'Donnell had not been personally attacked, that no injury had been done to him, and that he was not a leader of the movement. The Lord Chief Justice pointed out that Mr. O'Donnell had not gone into the witness box to say he had sustained one farthing's worth of damage, and the jury gave a verdict against him. But the Attorney General, who had appeared for *The Times*, took the opportunity of going over all the old charges, read the forged letter, and some other letters which *The Times* then published ; and read over the articles entitled "Parnellism and Crime." The Attorney General, of course, followed his instructions, and it was very significant that, even at this early stage of the proceedings, those who gave the instructions knew the letters to be a weak part of their case, though it was the foundation of the whole. He told the jury that the letter published by *The Times* on the 18th of April, 1887, was in the handwriting of Mr. Henry Campbell, private secretary to Mr. Parnell, and that the signature was well known to Mr. O'Donnell and others to be in Mr. Parnell's writing. He added, "I do not think that the authenticity of the letter will be disputed." This was said in face of Mr. Parnell's indignant denials in the House of Commons, and of the assurances of Mr. Campbell and others, continued over more than fourteen months, that the letter was a forgery. Mr. Ruegg, who was Mr. O'Donnell's counsel, had said that they should want to know from whom the letters were got, and how they were got. The Attorney General said :—

I believe the jury will be satisfied that, whatever be the faults of *The Times*, its conductors would not be guilty of dishonesty. They may have been imposed upon, but they say through me that if they had believed the letter which they have published not to be genuine, they would have withdrawn it and other documents long ago. You will find that this letter and other documents were in their possession for a considerable time, for many months, while most careful investigation was being made as to whether or not they were genuine documents, and you will be told the means which they took to investigate them, the comparisons they were able to make, and which you will be

able to make. The question is, is that particular document (and that is not by any means the only document) a genuine document or not? I mean, was it signed by Charles Stewart Parnell, or was it not? It is utterly immaterial where it came from. Now, the statement made by Mr. Ruegg was this: "I shall want to know what proof they have, in the face of the positive denial upon oath, of the person to whom the letter is attributed, that he wrote that letter." Of course, gentlemen, we shall wait and see what that denial is. "We shall want to know where they got it, and you will want to know from whom they got it, that you may test its value." Gentlemen, you do not want to know from whom they got it, or for what purpose they got it. Why do they want to know it? Who are behind Mr. Ruegg in this matter? The men who were undoubtedly connected with the Land League organization, the men who had been undoubtedly connected with the worst form, it may be, of the organization, by which, I mean the American section—the Link Battalion as it has been called—the American branch—the Invincibles, who were capable, on my learned friend's own admission, of the monstrous and iniquitous crimes that were perpetrated in the Autumn of 1881. Many of those men are still in existence. Those who are behind my friend know well that the days of danger from dynamite and assassination are not over, and cost what it may to *The Times*, although they will put before you the proof of the grounds upon which they believed them to be genuine, they will not expose one of the several persons from whom those documents were obtained, to a risk which they know to be a real risk, that many hours would not elapse from the time of their names being given and returning to their vocations, before they would be in actual and positive danger to their lives. Gentlemen, you will not care who the people are, you will test the documents—we invite you to do so by every means in your power which are open to you, and open to every one who has to decide the issue, whether the documents are genuine, and if you are satisfied that the documents are genuine, you will not care from whom they come, or what was the hand that put it in the power of *The Times* to disclose them. They ought to care, and I believe you will care, for what the fate of those men would be if, the documents being genuine, they have disclosed them, and I say here, *The Times* are fully aware of the responsibility they take. They will put before you such evidence as they can, and all the evidence they can, to prove the letters to be genuine, but they will not, whatever may be the effect upon your judgment, disclose for one single instant, or by the slightest hint, the name of the person from whom they got them, because it is not material, and it is in no sense necessary in order that you should come to a judgment in determining whether these documents are genuine. The question is, are they

genuine? who wrote them? and who signed them? and not whether they were obtained from this man or that man, or by what means they were put into the custody of *The Times*.

Further on in the same address to the jury the Attorney General returned to this question of the origin and authenticity of the letters, and said,

It is an incident, and an incident only in this case, but, of course, a most important one. Let me say this to you, and I repeat it to you, that though it cost *The Times* this verdict, *The Times* will not state by whom—whether confederate or not of Charles Stewart Parnell—that letter was handed over to them; and it is not right, knowing what has happened in the last few years—aye, within the last few months—that any such request should be made.

These passages from a historic speech may go down to posterity as the prerogative instance of the *suppressio veri* and the *suggestio falsi*. Had the Attorney General or those who instructed him, known the full weakness of their case, they could not have fenced it round with greater caution. It was only after preparing the minds of the jury for believing that the letters had been procured from confederates of the writer or of those to whom they were written—that these men had bound *The Times* to secrecy, and would be exposed to the vengeance of assassins if their treachery were known—and after having added to these false suggestions the reckless insinuation that the people who wanted to know were the assassins themselves, that the Attorney General produced the fresh documents. These were first of all, two or three letters which he said were written by Mr. Egan, and related to supplies of money sent to M., who, he suggested, might be one of the Mullets, one of whom was connected with the Phoenix Park murders. With these letters, thus interpreted, he connected three other letters purporting to be signed by Mr. Parnell, which he said indicated that Mr. Parnell had supplied the money thus supposed to be sent to Mullet. Of these letters, one became important afterwards on account of the mis-spelling of a word in it.



DEAR SIR, Tuesday.

Tell B. to write me direct. Have not received the papers.

Yours very truly,

CHAS. S. PARNELL.

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DEAR SIR, Tuesday.

Send full particulars. What amount does he want? Other letter to hand.

Yours very truly,

CHAS. S. PARNELL.

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DEAR SIR, Tuesday.

I see no objection to your giving the amount asked for. There is not the least likelihood of what you are apprehensive of happening.

Yours truly,

CHAS. S. PARNELL.

These letters were all read and commented upon in such a way as to lead up to another, the most important of all, and to suggest that it was a part of the same correspondence. "I now come to a document," said the Attorney General, "which has never been disclosed, except to the plaintiff (Mr. O'Donnell) and his solicitors." It was written, he said, from Kilmainham prison, and the words "Yours very truly, Charles S. Parnell," were undoubtedly in Mr. Parnell's handwriting. The jury would be able to compare the signature with seven or eight contemporaneous signatures of Mr. Parnell's, written in Kilmainham in the presence of the Governor. He was not able to suggest in whose handwriting the body of the letter was, but there were several friends of Mr. Parnell's in Kilmainham at the time, and it might have been one of them. It was not initialed by the Governor, but no doubt a good many letters got out which the Governor never saw. The letter was sent to Paris. Having thus kept silence on the mis-spelling, fenced round other weak points in the evidence of authenticity, and carefully suggested the sense

in which the letter should be taken, the Attorney General read it :—

DEAR E.,

9/1/82.

What are these fellows waiting for? This inaction is inexcusable ; our best men are in prison and nothing is being done.

Let there be an end of this hesitency. Prompt action is called for.

You undertook to make it hot for old Forster and Co. Let us have some evidence of your power to do so.

My health is good, thanks.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES S. PARNELL.

He followed up the reading of this letter, heightened its importance, and contrived to suggest that it had come from the treacherous recipient of it, by saying once more, with solemn emphasis, that though it should cost *The Times* the verdict, they would not, for reasons he had already indicated, disclose the name of the person by whom it was handed to them. Then some less important letters were produced ; and then the one which had been published in *The Times* on the 18th of April, 1887, which I have already given on page 238. The Attorney General introduced this forgery with all the art of the rhetorician. He wove it in as part of the story of crime. He explained the circumstances under which he imagined it had been written, said the plaintiff's counsel had declared it to be an impudent forgery, and then exclaimed with indignation, "as if, forsooth, *The Times* did not consider the matter pretty carefully, as if they rushed red-hot to the publication of the letter. Why, for weeks before publishing it they examined it carefully with genuine documents." Having read it and commented upon it, the Attorney General supported it by two other letters, both written, he said, on the same 16th of June, and both showing that Mr. Parnell had received other remonstrances similar to those to which the letter about Lord Frederick Cavendish's death was a reply.

DEAR SIR, June 16th, 1882.

I am sure you will feel that I could not appear in Parliament in the face of this thing unless I condemned it. Our position there is always difficult to maintain ; it would be untenable but for the course we took. That is the truth. I can say no more.

Yours very truly,

CHAS. S. PARNELL.

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DEAR SIR, June 16th, 1882.

I shall always be anxious to have the good will of your friends, but why do they impugn my motives, I could not consent to the conditions they would impose, but I accept the entire responsibility for what we have done.

Yours very truly,

CHAS. S. PARNELL.

The case, of forgery, of forced inference, and of imagination all compact was then completed by the reading of the articles from *The Times*, entitled "Parnellism and Crime." In this way, therefore, Mr. O'Donnell's absurd action gave *The Times* and the Government the opportunity they desired of reviving public interest in these half forgotten articles, and in giving new currency to all the charges, on the strength of which Lord Salisbury had spoken of the Liberal leaders as having shown indifference to and perhaps even tolerance of murder.

On the day after the verdict in this ridiculous trial, Mr. Parnell made a personal statement in the House of Commons. He had hoped, he said, to have had the opportunity of denying on oath the charges made against him, and had attended the Court on two days in the expectation of being called as a witness ; but the sudden close of the trial deprived him of the opportunity of giving evidence. He then read seven of the letters, and spoke of the refusal of *The Times* to say from whom the letters were procured, or to produce any external evidence of their genuineness. With respect to the one addressed by Mr. Egan to Carey, he showed that it must have been found by the police in Carey's house, and that consequently there



could be no difficulty in bringing forward the constable who found it. Those which purported to be from himself he denounced as forgeries. As to the one beginning "Dear E.," he said, "I never wrote it, I never signed it, I never directed it to be written, I never authorized it to be written, I never saw it." So with the rest. Among the letters which Mr. Parnell regarded as probably genuine, was one from Frank Byrne, acknowledging a cheque for a hundred pounds. This letter was brought forward to show that £100 had been given to Byrne to facilitate his escape to Paris after the Phoenix Park murders. Mr. Justin McCarthy, who followed Mr. Parnell, told the House of Commons the circumstances in which he, as President of the Irish National League, had paid the cheque to Mr. Byrne as its Secretary. At the next meeting of the House, Sir Wilfrid Lawson asked whether the Government would consent to the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the charges against Mr. Parnell. But the Tory party wanted no inquiry and they shouted "No." Mr. Parnell followed up the question, adding that the Committee might consist, if Mr. Smith liked, "entirely of English and Scotch members of this House and no Irish representatives," and he asked that the Committee should inquire especially into the authenticity of the letters. Mr. Smith flatly refused to promote any investigation, and again referred Mr. Parnell, as Mr. Matthews had referred Miss Cass, to the tribunals. Mr. Parnell then gave notice of motion for a Select Committee, and of a request to the First Lord of the Treasury to give him a day for the discussion of this notice "in order that I may have an opportunity of repelling the foul and untruthful charges which have been made against me by his Attorney General."

It was three days before Mr. Parnell's question could be formally asked, and the delay gave the Government time to consider their policy. They could not maintain their refusal of all inquiry, but they would not give the kind of investigation the Irish members asked. When Mr. Parnell's

request for a day for his motion came on, Mr. W. H. Smith read a written answer. The Government, he said, retained their opinion "that the proposed tribunal is altogether unfitted to deal with the question—limited as it is in scope and character—which the honourable member proposes to refer to it, but they are willing to propose to Parliament to pass an Act appointing a Commission, which should consist wholly, or mainly consist, of judges with full powers, as in the case of other statutable Commissions, to inquire into the allegations and charges made against members of Parliament by the defendants in the recent action of *O'Donnell versus Walter*." He added that the Government could not give a day for the consideration of Mr. Parnell's motion. The offer of this Commission was at once accepted by the Irish members and their friends, and then the Government seems to have repented making it. When the notice appeared on the Order Book it was at once seen that Mr. Smith's offer had not been carried out. His words read from the written paper had spoken of the inquiry as "limited in scope and character," and the commission he offered was to investigate the charges made against members of Parliament. But on the notice-paper the words were "members of Parliament and other persons," thus giving unlimited extension to the investigation. Mr. Smith, moreover, proposed to bring on the motion after twelve at night, when it could not be taken if it was opposed. The Government, in fact, wished to carry the Bill without discussion. "We do not desire to debate the proposal," said Mr. Smith, in reply to Mr. Parnell, "and I have put it therefore in this position, in order that it may be either accepted or rejected by the honourable member in the form in which it stands. If it is received and accepted the Bill will be immediately printed, but I may frankly say that I do not anticipate making any arrangement for a debate on the second reading of a Bill of this kind. It was an offer made by the Government to the honourable member and his friends, to be either accepted or rejected."

Mr. Smith moved the first reading without a speech, and there was a brief debate. Mr. Parnell protested against being expected to accept a Bill before it was printed, and without a word of explanation, and Mr. Smith then said the Bill might be discussed when it was in Committee, and the names of the judges would then be mentioned. But between the 16th, when he said this, and the 23rd there was another change of policy. The Government no longer left it to the Irish members to accept the Bill or to reject it; but determined to force it on them. Mr. Parnell and his colleagues wished the charges against themselves to be investigated, the Government had included "other persons," in order to make the inquiry as wide as the history of the whole Irish movement. So, on the 23rd of July, Mr. Smith moved the second reading of the Bill, and in doing so announced that Sir James Hannen would be President of the Commission Court, and that Mr. Justice Day and Mr. Justice Smith would sit with him. Mr. Parnell challenged the Government to give him a judicial inquiry into the charges made against him, and said that if the question of the forged letters were taken up at once, he would clear himself of them within a week. Mr. Gladstone, who spoke after Mr. Parnell, protested against including "other persons who are not distinctly before us, in any capacity whatever, and with regard to whom no definite allegations have been made, and who may include any number of thousands of her Majesty's subjects." The Irish members agreed with him in rejecting the scheme for so large and wide an inquiry, of which no one could see the end. Mr. Chamberlain supported the Bill in a striking speech. Mr. E. Lees had said that if the authenticity of the letters was proved in the course of the inquiry, the public would think very little of the other charges. "I agree with the member for Oldham," said Mr. Chamberlain, "that these letters constitute the principal of these charges, and no inquiry would be satisfactory which did not give a principal place to an examination into the



authenticity of these letters. If they should be successfully shown to be base forgeries, all the rest of the case will be so prejudiced that I much doubt whether the public will pay much attention to it." Sir William Harcourt said that the Government in stating their case on the previous night made no reference to the letters. "They evaded those letters, they shrank from them; they put their case on other grounds." The trial, he insisted, was not an ordinary trial, it was a political prosecution. "The Government," he said, "have offered to men who have been personally libelled an inquiry which gives them no personal redress."

The Bill was read a second time without a division, and the House went into Committee upon it on the 30th of July. Mr. Sexton then moved that there should be five Commissioners, and was defeated by the small majority of 233 to 195. There was much discussion over the name of Mr. Justice Day, but it was retained by 269 to 180. The discussion lasted for four nights, every concession to the Irish members being refused. The Bill was at last forced through by a resolution similar to that by which the Coercion Bill had been passed, that at one o'clock on Friday morning, the third of August, the clauses should all be put without discussion. Just before the hour arrived Mr. Parnell spoke. "We feel we are approaching this inquiry," he said, "which has been shaped by yourselves and your superior force, without your having given us the opportunity of stating our views with the fulness and gravity the occasion requires. Some honourable friends of mine had placed amendments on the paper with regard to enforcing the attendance of witnesses before the Commission. These amendments, by your action, have been shut up. I consider, and my counsel consider, these amendments are vital for the purpose of proving the forgery of these letters. We have information that there are men at present in London whom we can lay our hands upon, if they will wait for us to do so after this Bill has passed. They have knowledge of the forgery of these letters, and if we can place them in

the box we will force them to admit that forgery." Mr. Parnell's appeal was vain. "The Coercionist Coalition," as Mr. John Morley called them, would consent to no amendments which would enable the accused persons to insist on knowing from whom *The Times* had got the letters and who their accusers were. At one o'clock on Friday morning the discussion was stopped, and all the clauses were put and carried without a division. The Bill was read a third time on the 9th of August, and sent to the Lords, who read it a second time on the 10th, when in a powerful speech Lord Herschell contended that the Irish members had been unfairly treated, and that the questions submitted to the Commission of Judges were political questions, which the Judges were not the proper persons to decide. The Bill was run through Committee, and on the 11th was read a third time and passed.

This measure at once became the chief political topic of the time. From the moment of its first announcement nothing else was thought of. At a dinner party given by Sir Wilfrid Lawson to the members for Northumberland and Westmorland, on the 17th of July, Mr. Gladstone said, "No greater injustice ever was committed by a public assembly than the injustice of last year, when the House of Commons, by a large majority, refused the request of one of its own members for a Select Committee—which would necessarily have had a majority of his political opponents upon it—to examine into the question of the forgery of a certain letter which had been produced, and which, if not forged, was sufficient to damn and destroy his political character." Speaking of the Bill itself, he said that the first requirement of justice was that there should be definite issues to try; but to put before the judges a speech twelve hours in length, and to put on them the responsibility of extracting from it the matter they might think it fit to examine, was absurd, and worse than absurd. Mr. John Morley, speaking at Morpeth, on the 22nd, said the only new element in the charges of *The Times* was in the letters, all the rest was

included in Mr. Forster's speech in the first months of 1883. Lord Rosebery, in a speech at Stanstead, said, "These men will have to labour under the charges brought against them—these disgraceful charges—until the whole inquiry is concluded, and they will have the pleasure of paying for every day of delay which passes before they are either delivered from all aspersions or convicted. Delay is the whole essence of the proposed Government inquiry." On the 29th of July Mr. Chamberlain took up his parable in a speech at a garden party at his Birmingham home. He passed over the letters which a short time before he had described as the chief points for inquiry, and defended the new resolution of the Government to make it as wide as possible. "We want to know," he said, "on whose shoulders rests the responsibility of turning a political, constitutional agitation into an agitation for the furtherance of crime." The General Committee of the National Liberal Federation, meeting at the National Liberal Club on the first of August, condemned the Bill as a departure from the usages of Parliament. Sir William Harcourt, speaking at Stoneleigh Park, said, "If you had been in the House of Commons as some of us have been, you would have seen it quite apparent that these gentlemen who have been trading on the forged letters, know very well that they are forged. Their whole behaviour,—their endeavour to escape from a square, straight issue upon the subject of the letters,—makes it apparent that they have never believed in them, though they have descended to use them. . . . They have been endeavouring to direct the Commission to everything, except the Irish members. The Irish members, you will be told, have been endeavouring to shirk the inquiry. That is a falsehood. All that they have demanded is that the inquiry should be concentrated on themselves." Mr. Balfour, speaking at the same time at a great Primrose League meeting in Eridge Park, said, "We have been occupied during the last fortnight in pressing a measure through the House of Commons, as we believed, in



conformity with the request made to us by Mr. Parnell and Mr. Parnell's associates. But with what gratitude have we been met?" What the public believed, however, and what is still believed is, that in accordance with Mr. Smith's original notice and with the actual title of the Bill, "Charges and Allegations (Members of Parliament) Bill," the original intention of the Government was to give the Irish members the inquiry they asked, into the charges against themselves, but it was afterwards modified, and "other persons" were included in the inquiry at the request of Mr. Walter, and in the interests of *The Times*.

So the political debate went on. Lord Salisbury scarcely joined in it when he spoke at the usual Ministerial banquet at the Mansion House on the eighth of August. He quickly turned from the domestic unrest to our foreign relations, said that what England wished was, "that there should be an Egypt self-sustaining, strong enough to master internal disorder, and to repel an external foe. Until we can be satisfied that that state of things exists," he continued, "we shall remain to assist Egypt; the moment we are satisfied that it exists we shall gladly relieve ourselves from the unnecessary burden." The holiday was then close at hand, and on the 13th, Parliament adjourned till the sixth of November. On the 18th of August Mr. John Morley reviewed the work of the Session in a speech at Nocton Park, near Lincoln. "This Tory Government, this Coalition Government," he said, "though they do not care one atom what 85 constituencies say in Ireland, are so sensitive to opinion in England, that the Spalding election alone it was that made them bring in the Allotments Act." Speaking of the mode in which the Parnell Commission Act was forced through, he said, "Cromwell was thought to have done a very strong thing when he sent one of his captains to turn the members out of the House of Commons, to lock the door, and to walk away with the key in his pocket. But I do not myself see much difference between Colonel Pride, walking away with the key of the House in his pocket, and

Mr. Smith bringing down this resolution of his, and turning us practically out of the House of Commons, forbidding us to debate this important measure. They did the same thing last year ; but mark one thing. They only do it when it is an Irish measure." In another part of his speech Mr. Morley exactly described, as I have already done, Mr. Balfour's conduct as Irish Secretary. "On no single occasion has the Chief Secretary for Ireland admitted that there was a single fault in a single subordinate agent of the Irish Government. No policeman, according to him, has ever done an imprudent thing, and no Resident Magistrate has ever done an unlawful thing. . . . Whatever any constable says must be true, and whatever any Irish member says must be false. We see it day by day. Nothing that an Irish member can say, that is not treated with contempt and contumely." Two days later Mr. Gladstone spoke to a large deputation of Burslem Liberals at Hawarden. Discussing the Parnell Commission, he pointed out that it was the letters which all impartial men, even among the Tories, admitted to be the main issue to be tried, "and we must hope that the Commission of Judges that has been appointed will examine to the bottom, and at once, into the case of these letters." He pointed out the great advantage given to *The Times*, the enormous cost that the defence would impose on the Irish members, and the fact that by an express clause in the Bill *The Times* was protected against any action at law arising out of the charges, even if they were proved to be false. "That is, gentlemen," said Mr. Gladstone, "the sort of fair play, and the sort of justice, which a Tory Government, and a Tory minority swelled into a majority by Dissident Liberals, and the House of Lords at their back, no wonder, have thought fit to administer to the representatives of Ireland."

On the 27th of August Mr. Balfour replied to Mr. Morley by causing the arrest of two more Irish members, of an Irish editor, and of Father Kennedy, a popular and respected priest. The three laymen—Mr. John Redmond, M.P., Mr.

W. Redmond, M.P., and Mr. Walsh, editor of *The Wexford People*, were taken by warrant like thieves or forgers instead of by summons, as is the universal usage in such cases. Mr. Walsh was on his way to undergo an operation at an oculist's, which was proved to be urgent. He and the two members of Parliament protested in vain against the cruelty and indignity of such arrests, but Mr. Balfour was full of the idea of "Government that does not flinch." Many of the officers and honourable men whose duty it was to carry out the orders he issued from the Irish office, hated their work. Colonel Turner, who had at that moment to superintend some cruel evictions at Kilrush, gave the Correspondent of *The Daily News* permission to report his opinion of his hideous duty. "I see no good in renewing these evictions," he said. "Who gains by them? Nobody. The wretched tenants are thrown out upon the world to do nothing. The landlord's agent does nothing but break down a house, and having broken it, he goes away and thinks no more of it." Yet it was for too active sympathy with victims such as these that Irish members, and editors, and priests, were caught like thieves and sent off to a thief's imprisonment, and that Irish members were to be put on their trial before a perfectly new tribunal. Colonel Turner was not a philosophic professor of statesmanship feebly imitating Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, but a humane soldier, who some years before had "evacuated" Dongola, sending all the Egyptians, men, women, and children, down the Nile without injury to the weakest, and riding through the streets to make sure that none were left—himself the last to leave.

The first meeting of the Commission of Judges was held on the 17th of September. In opening the proceedings Sir James Hannen said the judges had only to inquire into the charges and allegations made in the course of the proceedings of "O'Donnell *versus* Walter," and only so far as they affected the persons against whom they were directed in the course of those proceedings. Sir Charles Russell, Mr. Asquith and others appeared for the Irish members,



and Mr. Graham for *The Times* in the absence of the Attorney General. There was a little fight over the documents. Mr. Graham asked and got power to call for documents and books in possession of the defendants, and resisted the demand of Sir C. Russell for the inspection of letters; but the order for documents was made to apply to both sides. It was arranged that the proceedings should be opened by counsel. But who was to begin? "We make no allegations," said the Counsel for *The Times*. "Then who does?" asked the President. "Who make such 'charges and allegations' as are alluded to in the Act under which the Court sits?" The Judges had to answer this question themselves. They decided that *The Times* must give particulars of the charges. It was also decided that Mr. Dillon should be released in order that he might attend the Court. The next sitting was on the 22nd of October, when the Attorney General appeared, with Sir Henry James, Mr. Murphy and others for *The Times*; Sir Charles Russell and Mr. Asquith for Mr. Parnell; and Mr. R. T. Reid, Mr. Lockwood and others for other members of Parliament. There were sixty-five Irish members against whom it was proposed to give evidence, besides a large number of other persons, and the reports of 310 meetings were put in at which one or other of these members had made speeches, or caused speeches to be made, "inciting to the commission of crimes, outrages, boycotting, and intimidation." The particulars were those which had been put forward by *The Times* in the case of O'Donnell *versus* Walter, and hence the accusers describe themselves as "the defendants," whereas in this Commission trial they were in the position of plaintiffs. The sixty-five members of Parliament were accused of being members of a conspiracy and organization called the Irish Land League, and by several other names, which was founded in 1879 "to establish the absolute independence of Ireland as a separate nation." This object was to be accomplished by agitating against rents so as to impoverish and ultimately expel the

landlords who were styled "the English garrison." The mode of action was, said the document, to organize a system of coercion and intimidation in Ireland which was sustained and enforced by boycotting, and by the commission of crimes and outrages. Further:—

It is charged and alleged that the members of Parliament mentioned in the schedule, approved, and by their acts and conduct led people to believe that they approved, of resistance to the law and the commission of crimes, outrages, and acts of boycotting and intimidation when committed in furtherance of the objects and resolutions of the said societies, and that persons who engaged in the commission of such crimes, outrages, and acts would receive the support and protection of the said societies and of their organization and influence.

This item was expanded into detailed charges, one of which led to the production of three of the letters:—

When on certain occasions they considered it politic to denounce, and did denounce, certain crimes in public; they afterwards made communications to their associates and others, with the intention of leading them to believe that such denunciation was not sincere. One instance of this, of which the said defendants propose to give evidence, is the following letters:—

Letter from C. S. Parnell, dated the 15th of May, 1882.

Letter from same, the 16th of June, 1882.

Another letter from the same of the same date.

The Attorney General in opening the case against the accused members and other persons spoke for five days, and on the sixth day the evidence began. On the seventh day Captain O'Shea was called, and in the course of his examinations photographic copies of the alleged letters of Mr. Parnell were shown to him. Captain O'Shea having examined them said he thought the signatures were in Mr. Parnell's handwriting. This incident led to an urgent request from Sir Charles Russell that the question of the letters might be taken at once, but nothing came of it. Day after day and week after week all kinds of witnesses were brought up, but the letters were kept in the background. Farmers, labourers, men who had been boycotted, victims or relatives of victims of midnight outrage, peasants

from the remote west, priests, magistrates, convicts, were examined in wearying succession, till the judges groaned on the bench, the counsel were all weary of their lives, the public lost interest in the proceedings, and the newspapers—with the solitary exception of *The Times*—ceased to give detailed reports. Autumn deepened into winter, Christmas came and the New Year began and still the long procession of these tiring witnesses kept on. Counsel asked again and again after the letters, the judges themselves appealed to the Attorney General to quicken his tardy pace, but still no approach was made to the great object and central purpose of the inquiry. In the beginning of February a witness appeared who revived the interest in the proceedings. He was a Government spy who had been a sham revolutionist for twenty years. This man was Thomas Edward Beach, a native of Colchester who passed under the assumed name of Major Le Caron. He was employed in the Fenian raid on Canada in 1870, and betrayed the movements of the raiders and so frustrated their efforts. He told in Court the secrets of the Fenian organization, and said that in 1881 he had been introduced to Mr. Parnell as “a friend from America,” when they discussed the possibility of bringing the Irish Land League, and the Irish Republican brotherhood to work together. The chief point in his evidence was an entirely political one, and had nothing to do with crime. He said Mr. Parnell had told him he had long since ceased to believe that anything but the force of arms would bring about the redemption of Ireland. Mr. Parnell said he did not think he had said so because he certainly never thought so. The Commissioners say on this part of the case :—

This being the evidence on the one side and the other as to this interview between Major Le Caron and Mr. Parnell, we have first to consider the probabilities of the case. It appears to us to be highly probable that Mr. Parnell would say to any one whom he regarded as a member of the physical force party in America, that he thought it desirable that an understanding should be brought about between that party and Mr. Parnell and the supporters of the Land League move-



ment. It was probable also that Mr. Devoy should be mentioned by Mr. Parnell as the person best able to bring about the understanding which he desired, for Devoy had undoubtedly been one of the principal agents by whom the support of a section of the Fenians had been obtained. The purpose for which such an alliance was to be formed and the terms on which it was to be based may be disputed, but the desire on the part of Mr. Parnell, Mr. Davitt, and other Land League leaders that the two parties of physical force and open political movement should act in harmony and not in opposition to one another has been proved. . . . Mr. Parnell denies that he ever said that he had long since ceased to believe that anything but force of arms would bring about the redemption of Ireland ; but he bases his denial on the fact that he never thought so. It is, however, not impossible that in conversation with a supposed revolutionist, Mr. Parnell may have expressed himself so as to leave the impression that he agreed with his interlocutor.

It was not till the 14th of February, 1889, the fiftieth day of the inquiry, that the great subject of the letters—the only matter of real interest and importance in the whole investigation — was approached. Nobody cared what speeches had been delivered, what wild schemes of revolution had been thought of, or what attempts had been made to link the physical force party in the United States with the constitutional movement at home. What everybody wished to know was—Did Mr. Parnell write these letters ; and if so what did they mean. The first day's evidence as to the letters revealed the weakness of the case for *The Times*. Mr. Soames, the solicitor to *The Times*, gave evidence on the amounts paid for them, the persons from whom they were procured, and the grounds on which they were believed to be genuine. The Attorney General had dwelt, with the greatest emphasis, on the many months *The Times* had held back the letters, while the most careful investigation was being made as to whether or not they were genuine documents. "You will be told," he had said, "the means they took to investigate them, the comparisons they were able to make, and which you will be able to make." Now at last these investigations stood revealed. Mr. Soames said that Mr. Macdonald, the manager of *The*

*Times*, had got the letters from Mr. Houston. Mr. Soames afterwards learned that Mr. Houston got them from Mr. Pigott, and much later had heard from Pigott himself. Pigott, however, had not told him where he got them, and he did not ask him. "I'll tell you why I did not ask him," said Mr. Soames. "He told me at the outset he would not tell me where and from whom he got them, and that if he ever did tell me he would do it himself in the witness-box." He had done no more, in fact, than to get some genuine signatures of Mr. Parnell's, and to compare such signatures with those Pigott had sold them. The next witness was Mr. Macdonald, manager of *The Times*. He confirmed what Mr. Soames had said. He was asked whether before April the 18th, 1887, the day when the first letter was published, he had made any inquiries as to the original recipients of the letters. "No," he answered, "I had taken no steps." "Am I to understand then," asked Mr. Asquith, "that the investigations you made were exclusively investigations into handwriting?" "Yes." "And that you took no steps to inquire who were the original recipients of the letters?" "No." Mr. Macdonald admitted that he accepted the letters because he thought the facsimile letter was just the sort of letter Mr. Parnell would be compelled to write under the circumstances. That about "making it hot for old Forster," would also be a very likely letter for him to write. And this was all that was behind the repeated assurances in the leading articles of *The Times*, that the greatest trouble had been taken to ascertain the genuineness of the letters, and that overwhelming proof would be forthcoming if Mr. Parnell and his friends were ever rash enough to put them to the test.

To Mr. Macdonald succeeded Mr. Houston, bringing the Commissioners one step nearer to the origin of the letters. It was from Mr. Houston *The Times* had got them, and Mr. Houston had now to say how he became possessed of them. He was a man of seven or eight and twenty, calling himself a journalist by profession, but now

secretary to the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, "a sort of anti-Land League," he said. He had published a pamphlet written by Pigott, called "Parnellism Unmasked," and had asked Pigott "to endeavour to procure any documentary evidence to fully sustain the allegations and suggestions in that pamphlet." Pigott therefore went to Paris and Lausanne, with an allowance from Mr. Houston of a pound a day and his expenses. He told a story of one Eugene Davis, whom he had seen there, who had certain letters that had been left in a house in Paris. Pigott said he had got these letters, and he was then sent at Mr. Houston's expense to New York to get authority to publish them. In the end eleven letters were forthcoming, five attributed to Mr. Parnell, and six to Mr. Egan; and Mr. Houston—who had borrowed twelve hundred pounds of Dr. Maguire, of Dublin, to pay for them—hurried off with them to London. He saw Mr. Buckle in April, 1886, but Mr. Buckle declined to have anything to do with the matter. He saw Mr. Buckle again in June and again in October. "I showed him the batch of eleven letters, and I took them away with me, as he was not quite certain as to his action. He asked me to see him again, and then asked me if I had any objection to show them to Mr. Macdonald. I said I had not." Mr. Macdonald took the bait at once, never asking Mr. Houston how he got possession of the manuscripts. In the meantime, Mr. Houston had shown copies of the letters to Mr. Stead, of *The Pall Mall Gazette*, and to Lord Hartington. In his cross-examination Mr. Houston said Pigott brought the first five letters to him at a hotel in Paris, but would not part with them till he got the money, as "the people downstairs" were waiting for it. "Aye, aye!" said Sir Charles Russell, "and did you go and see who were downstairs?" "No," said Mr. Houston. "No? No? Then did you ask who they were?" "No, I wished to keep myself aloof, I wanted to keep myself in ignorance of the source of the letters." So said Mr. Houston, and further confessed that his correspondence



with Pigott had all been destroyed after he had received the summons to give evidence before the Commission.

The strange admissions of these three witnesses, like the greetings of the witches to Macbeth, were only prologues to the swelling act. They prepared the public for the startling revelations which were at once to follow. Nobody now believed in the genuineness of the letters, and everybody knew that the Irish members suspected Richard Pigott to be the forger. His appearance in the witness-box was therefore looked for with the greatest interest and anxiety. It had been a weary story, but now it approached a dramatic episode, if not a startling end. Pigott appeared on the 20th of February. He told a story of a black box Mr. Frank Byrne had left behind him in Paris, and of two men into whose possession it had come, from whom he had got these letters. He swore to their genuineness. He told of his interviews with Mr. George Lewis and Mr. Labouchere, in which Mr. Lewis accused him of forgery and urged him to confess it in the witness-box, but he refused. He denied absolutely that he had forged the letters. Sir C. Russell began his cross-examination on the 21st. "Now, Mr. Pigott," he said, "will you be good enough to write some words on that sheet of paper for me." At the request of the President, Pigott sat down, and Sir Charles Russell said, "Will you write the words 'likelihood,' 'proselytism,' 'Patrick Egan,' 'P. Egan,' and the word 'hesitancy' with a small 'h'?" Pigott wrote them. Then Sir Charles Russell asked him about some letters of his own, chiefly one to Archbishop Walsh. Pigott changed colour. He admitted that he had written to the Archbishop, "but under the seal of the confessional." The communication was dated the fourth of March, 1887, three days before the publication in *The Times* of the first article on "Parnellism and Crime." It told the Archbishop of a great danger which threatened the Irish party, in the pending publication of statements which went to prove the complicity of Mr. Parnell himself, and some of his supporters in outrage and murder, "to be

followed, in all probability, by the institution of criminal proceedings against these parties by the Government." He assured the Archbishop that he wrote with full knowledge, and that he was "also able to point out how the designs may be successfully combated and finally defeated." There was a postscript, which said, "I need hardly add that did I consider the parties really guilty of the things charged against them, I should not dream of suggesting that your Grace should take part in the endeavour to shield them. I only wrote to impress upon your Grace that the evidence is apparently convincing, and would probably be sufficient to secure conviction, if submitted to an English jury." Questioned as to this letter, sentence by sentence, Pigott could give no explanation. His mind was a blank; he had no idea what he was speaking of; but at last he said it must be something more serious than the letters. "Can you tell us what it is?" asked Sir Charles Russell. "No," replied Pigott. "Nor where you got it?" "No." "Nor from whom?" "No." "It is still hermetically sealed in your bosom?" "No, for it has gone away out of my bosom." With this parting shot the whole court burst into laughter. It concluded the day's work, and the court adjourned to the morrow.

When it met on the next morning Pigott's cross-examination was continued, and Archbishop Walsh's reply to his communication was read. The Archbishop refused to interfere and said, "It is well that all such evidence as you refer to should be brought out into the light of day. I have such experience of how lies of the most circumstantial character have been told regarding the National cause, that I believe no statement regarding its leaders or advocates until I have had an opportunity of judging the statement for myself." Then Pigott himself explained that it was the letters about which he had written to the Archbishop, as he was nervous about them. In further examination, he said he wrote believing some of the letters were not genuine. "Which of the Parnell letters did you believe were not genuine?" asked

Sir C. Russell. "All of them," said Pigott, "because I could not recognize the handwriting of the body of them." "Not believing the Parnell letters to be genuine, did you say so much to Mr. Houston?" "I did not state that I believed they were not genuine. I said they might possibly be forgeries." Then followed exposures of his applications to Mr. Forster, and letters from Mr. Parnell to Pigott were produced containing identical sentences with some which had been used in the forged letters. Sir Charles Russell put him through an examination as to the methods of forgery, and then produced the paper written by Pigott at the beginning of his cross-examination, in which he had spelled "hesitency" and "likelehood" as they were misspelt in two of the forged letters. He had spelt "hesitency" in the same way in a letter written some years before, which Sir Charles Russell now put into his hands. After exposures of his neediness, his deceptions, and his attempts to get money from Mr. Forster under various pretences, with all of which he fenced and struggled till the Judges were unable to contain their laughter, the Court adjourned. It was Friday evening, and the next meeting was fixed for Tuesday. On Tuesday the Court met, and waited, but Pigott did not come. The President asked, "Where is the witness?" The Attorney General replied that he had not been seen at his hotel since eleven o'clock on the night before. Sir Charles Russell asked for a warrant for his arrest, and the President suggested that the Court should adjourn for an hour for the Attorney General to consider his course. Sir Charles Russell replied that whatever course *The Times* might take "we shall insist that the whole matter shall be gone through, for we deliberately charge," he said, "that behind Pigott, and behind that young man Houston there is a foul and abominable conspiracy." Then it came out that on Saturday Pigott called on Mr. Labouchere, who would only see him in presence of a witness. Mr. George Augustus Sala was sent for, and Pigott then confessed to Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Sala that all the letters were forged and that he had forged



them. Next morning Pigott's confession that he had forged all the letters was read in court by the clerk, with another confession, given to Mr. Shannon, that he had forged some, but that some were genuine. The Attorney General then withdrew the letters "with a full acknowledgment that after the evidence which has been given we are not entitled to say that they are genuine. . . . If I were entitled to do so," he added, "I might say much as to the manner in which those whom I represent have been imposed upon, but I desire in making this statement to abstain from introducing controversial matter. I claim, however, to remark that some words used by my learned friend yesterday did not escape our attention. He said that behind Pigott there had been a 'foul conspiracy.' I desire emphatically to say that if a foul conspiracy has existed, those whom we represent had no share whatever in it. That they have been misled and imposed upon is true. Therein lies their fault. But if it be said that their error extends beyond this fault, they earnestly ask that your Lordships will make the fullest inquiry as to any part they have taken, either in procuring those documents or in placing them before the public." On the next day it was announced that Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son had withdrawn from circulation at their bookstalls the pamphlets published by *The Times* containing the articles entitled "Parnellism and Crime," and on the second of March the news arrived that Pigott had committed suicide, at a hotel in Madrid, on the day before.

It was almost superfluous after this exposure of the foul conspiracy against him, that Mr. Parnell should go into the witness-box and deny on oath the authenticity of the letters. But immediately after the Attorney General had withdrawn them, the President said Sir Charles Russell might call witnesses as to the letters, and they would then consider the propriety of making a special report about them. Mr. Parnell was at once called, and said all the letters were forgeries. The Attorney General asked for an adjourn-

ment, which was granted. Mr. O'Kelly, M.P., Mr. H. Campbell, M.P., and Mr. Davitt then swore that the letters attributed to them were forgeries. Mr. Justin McCarthy testified that he had never to his knowledge even seen Pigott. Mr. Labouchere denied Pigott's statement that he had offered him a thousand pounds to swear that the letters were forgeries, and he and Mr. G. A. Sala and Mr. George Lewis gave the details of Pigott's confession. The judges resolved not to make a special report on the letters, and the Court passed on to the weary business which this great episode and catastrophe had interrupted. Long extracts were read, day after day, from *The Irish World*, intricate details were offered of remittances from the United States, and the Court and the Counsel and the public became wearier of the proceedings than ever. On the 13th of March the case for *The Times* was finished, and Sir Charles Russell began his great speech for the defence, afterwards published in an octavo volume of six hundred pages. The Court had already sat for sixty-three days, it had heard three hundred and forty witnesses, and a great part of the evidence given had, he said, been irrelevant to the case. "I cannot but feel," he said, "in rising to address your Lordships, that the utter, absolute collapse of the forged letters has taken out of this inquiry its pith and its marrow. It would be idle to affect that your Lordships do not know, what all the world knows, that without those letters there would have been no such Commission as your Lordships are now sitting upon, and that those letters are the only foundations on which rest the most reckless and the most calumnious of the remaining charges and allegations. Those letters run through the story of the libels in *The Times*, playing the part of the warp in the weaving of these webs of calumny." He then passed in review the history of Ireland from the Union onwards, showing that the bitter antagonism of the landlord class to the people among whom they lived was the source of social unrest, and the cause and origin of agrarian crime. He spoke for seven

days, concluding his address on the 12th of April with a brilliant peroration. "The inquiry intended as a curse has proved to be a blessing. Designed, prominently designed, to ruin one man, it has been his vindication. In opening this case, I said that we represented the accused. My Lords, I claim leave to say that today the positions are reversed." Then pointing to the Counsel for *The Times* he said, "We are the accusers—the accused are there."

After Sir C. Russell's great speech a number of witnesses for the defence were examined, and when the Court refused to order the production of the books of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, that the defendants might know what payments had been made to Pigott and to other witnesses, Sir Charles Russell withdrew. Some of the Land League books, which were asked for, could not be found, and the judges said "no valid excuse was given for their non-production." On the 25th of July the Commission adjourned till the 24th of October, when Mr. Biggar, Mr. Davitt, and Sir Henry James addressed the judges, the last speaking for twelve days. The Commission closed on the 22nd of November. The Report was presented to Parliament on the 13th of February, 1890. It was a history of the Land League movement. The Commissioners found that the members of Parliament were not members of a conspiracy for making Ireland independent, but some of them, with Mr. Davitt, formed the Land League with that object; that they did enter into a conspiracy to promote an agitation against rents with the object of getting rid of the landlords, "the English garrison;" that they circulated *The Irish World* and other seditious newspapers; but that they did not incite to crime, though incitements to intimidation sometimes led to crime, and some of them persisted in such incitements though they knew this to be the effect; that they provided for the defence of persons charged with crime, and helped their families, but did not subscribe to testimonials to criminals, were not associated with them, and did not make payments to help



them to escape, though payments had been made to persons injured in the commission of crime. It was also true that they accepted subscriptions from the Physical Force party in the United States. On the great question raised by the forged letters, the Commissioners said, "We find that the charge that 'when on certain occasions they thought it politic to denounce, and did denounce certain crimes in public, they afterwards led their supporters to believe such denunciations were not sincere' is not established. We entirely acquit Mr. Parnell and the other respondents of the charge of insincerity in their denunciation of the Phoenix Park murders, and find that the 'facsimile' letter, on which this charge was chiefly based, is a forgery." They also found that all the letters produced by Pigott were forgeries.

Thus vanished, "like an unsubstantial pageant, faded," the vast fabric of calumny on which the Government and its supporters had traded for four years. All the chief charges were found to be untrue, those which were true were of minor importance, such as the acceptance of money help from violent men in America, the effect of speeches in stimulating to the crime of refusing rent or boycotting opponents, and the defence of men charged with these and perhaps with other crimes. The greatest emphasis had been laid on three distinct charges. The first of these was put by Lord Salisbury in the inuendo (page 244), "When the gentleman who intimately knew Mr. Parnell murdered Mr. Burke"; the others were that Mr. Parnell knew Sheridan and Boyton to have been organizing outrages; and that he paid money to Byrne to enable him to escape from justice. This last charge the Commissioners entirely contradict, of the second they say that it was not proved; of the first and chief, formulated by *The Times* in the words "that Mr. Parnell was intimate with the leading Invincibles, that he probably learned from them what they were about when he was released on parole in April, 1882, and that he recognized the Phoenix Park murders as their handiwork"; the judges say "We find that there is no foundation for this

charge. We have already stated that the Invincibles were not members of the Land League." Yet it was on this charge alone, founded on a series of palpable forgeries, which half an hour's inquiry would have exposed, and into the origin of which the Attorney General deprecated inquiry and endeavoured to prevent it, that Lord Salisbury accused Mr. Gladstone (page 245) of language "marked by indifference to, and perhaps even by a tolerance of murder," and that Sir Henry James spoke of his old colleagues on the front Opposition bench as greater offenders than the inventors of the Plan of Campaign, "the men who now give their moral sanction to crime."

## CHAPTER XVII.

*A BUSY AUTUMN.*

SOON after members of Parliament had got away for their summer holiday the text of the Sugar Bounties Convention was published. This monument of useless labour had for its chief result, the giving prominence and importance to the Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Trade, Baron de Worms. There had been for some years an agitation in the East end of London against the bounties paid by some of the sugar producing countries on sugar exported to this country. Lord Salisbury had patronized the agitators, and the Tory party had made good political use of the agitation. As soon as he returned to power they put pressure on him, and he made a great show of activity on their behalf. A Conference of the countries interested was called in London, where it sat at the end of 1887, with Baron de Worms for chairman. A Protocol was drawn up and signed, in which the delegates advised their Governments to take steps to abolish the bounties. Baron de Worms drew up a Convention by which all the Powers bound themselves to exclude "bounty-fed" sugar, or to meet it with a duty equivalent to the bounty. But they did not all sign it. France and Austria withheld their concurrence till all the sugar producing and sugar consuming countries of Europe had come in to the agreement. Brazil, Sweden, and Denmark would have nothing to do with the Convention. By its terms this country was committed to the proposal of a Commission to sit in London to decide what



sugar was bounty fed, and to what extent. On the Report of this Commission we were to act, if Parliament consented, and were to refuse to receive sugar, artificially cheapened on our behalf by those who brought it to our ports. The Powers to be represented on this Commission were Belgium, Germany, Holland, Italy, Russia and Spain. Four of these—Belgium, Germany, Holland, and Russia—are sugar producing countries, and they were to determine for us whether we should buy sugar from France, Sweden, the United States, Brazil, and Austria, which compete with them in our markets. Such was the Convention the text of which was issued to an astonished world on the last day of August, 1888.

A piece of work not much more useful was produced by Mr. Chamberlain, who issued as a pamphlet a series of articles which had appeared in *The Birmingham Daily Post*, suggesting a method of dealing with Ireland. Direct help from the Imperial Parliament to Irish industry; an extensive transfer of the land on safe conditions from the present landlords to the tenants; and a large extension of local government as soon as the land quarrel was healed, made up the policy of "the Radical Unionists." The scheme was still-born. It did not even live to get a name. Mr. Chamberlain however, showed great activity in these autumn days. There was a Conference of the Dissident Liberals at Bradford, at which he made a couple of brilliant and energetic speeches, full of the cutting sarcasm of which he is a master, and fuller still of attacks on those whom he described as "our Gladstonian friends." He compared Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Illingworth, and others to the Girondists, but at the same time accused them of "lending their respectability" to cover outrages, the very reverse of the course that Vergniaud and Gensonné and Sillery and Duchâtel took. He omitted to say to which of their accusers, Couthon or Hébert or Chabot or Fabre d'Eglantine he compared himself. He spoke of the entire disappointment of his hopes of reunion with the Liberals,

urged the formation of a National party, and expressed the wish that a good Irish policy should be brought forward by the Government as an alternative to that of Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Morley, speaking at Ipswich on the 29th, replied to Mr. Chamberlain that the Girondists were men who made fine speeches about liberty and justice and then lost heart and turned back ; and described Mr. Chamberlain's suggestions of an Irish policy as not serious plans, but pricks of conscience. On the same day Mr. Balfour made a great speech at Glasgow, defending all his Irish administration and boldly re-asserting his former charge that under Mr. Gladstone's government Irish political prisoners had been treated exactly in the same way as that in which he had treated them. He referred to the case of Mr. Harrington, M.P., who had been imprisoned for two months. "During those two months," said Mr. Balfour, "he had to do everything the so-called political prisoners last year had to do—plank bed, prison fare, the exercise, the whole business," and he and his audience seemed to regard this statement as fully justifying all the severities of his own administration. So the political controversy went on. Nearly every day brought its speech, and almost every other day its reply, while both sides were looking, one with hope and the other with apprehension, to what the inquiry into the Parnell letters might bring forth.

The Municipal elections on the first of November showed a further Liberal gain. On the vast number of contests all over the kingdom, the balance in 1887 had been eighteen in favour of the Liberals, in 1888 it was thirty-five. On the sixth and seventh of November the National Liberal Federation held its meetings at Birmingham. More than three thousand delegates attended, and more than a hundred members of Parliament. Mr. Gladstone's attendance gave unusual interest to the proceedings, and he made several speeches. In the first he replied to Mr. Balfour's statement about the treatment of Irish political prisoners under the Liberal administration.

Mr. Gladstone said it was not wholly without truth, and "the existence of these abuses," he added, "is first among the very reasons that have made us to see and to know the very hopelessness of the system under which Ireland is governed, and to wash our hands of the responsibility for that system once and for all." Replying to Mr. Balfour's *tu quoque* on the treatment of Irish prisoners Mr. Gladstone turned to his statement about Mr. Harrington, to which Lord Spencer had replied. Mr. Gladstone said—

The facts are these. Mr. Harrington was imprisoned under a sentence of two months for a speech that he had made. Lord Spencer, I believe, has expressed his opinion that he did wrong in causing that imprisonment, or having anything to do with it; but that has to do with the system of Coercion, not with the matter I am now upon. In conformity with the usual course of prison administration in Ireland—for, as I tell you, under an anti-national administration every kind of abuse is certain to creep in—in the course of prison administration Mr. Harrington was immediately subjected to all those modes of treatment which we have termed, and which we shall continue to term indignities. Lord Spencer was totally ignorant of the particulars; he had not the least idea of what was going on. Mr. Parnell fortunately stated them, and complained of them in the House of Commons. In that way, and in no other way, they came to the knowledge of Lord Spencer; and the moment that Lord Spencer heard of that state of things he wrote orders to correct it. He did this—I am now going to give you his words, or the exact substance of his words—"The moment my attention was called to it I immediately dealt with the matter." He ordered the English practice—which is one of great leniency, decency, and humanity—the English practice to be applied in Ireland. "I directed that Mr. Harrington should be removed from Mullingar to Galway. He was removed in his own clothes; he was not put with criminals; he took exercise alone; he was not in the infirmary, nor in ill-health, but his diet was altered and he got everything that in reason he liked to ask for, and the doctor acquainted him with the cause. He had a good bed; he had good food; he was also allowed newspapers, stationery, and writing materials."

In opening the meeting of the Council, Sir James Kitson said that 3,300 delegates had assembled. Among the encouraging signs of the times, Sir James Kitson mentioned that some of their most valued friends had returned



to the Federation, "among them, our old and esteemed friend, the real Father of the Caucus, Mr. William Harris, who, for a time after the Westminster meeting when the family retired, ceased to work with us, but whom I am glad to say is once more a valued friend of the Committee." Mr. John Morley, in the course of a great speech, said, "I am not sure that Lord Hartington will be best pleased when the Irish question is got out of the way. We know perfectly well that the first effect of that operation will be the quickening of the pace of our own legislation. We are not going back to the Palmerston days. There will be a brisk movement in many directions which will make Lord Hartington open his eyes." He concluded with some words which strangely kindled his great audience, "Dominions, thrones, principalities and powers, I care little for them, except so far as they are instrumental in making more men happier, and happier in a better way. Most of us here care, I think, only for politics as they directly or indirectly, remotely or immediately, lead to more light, more comfort, being shed into the cottage and the home. We want to make,—whether in this island or in Ireland, or in our widespread realm all over the surface of the globe,—we want to make the home, however humble it may be, better and brighter." This is the sentiment which, utter it where and when one may, rouses popular audiences to enthusiasm. It is the deep underlying motive of the great Liberal and Radical movement of the time. On the next day there was a Conference of the Women's Liberal Federation, and a meeting at the Town Hall, over which Mrs. Gladstone presided, and at which Lady Aberdeen, in moving the first resolution, brought out this aspect of the Liberal movement as one of healing, and reconciliation and peace, "When rallying round a great principle, shall we be ashamed to own it, a religious idea—justice, love, sympathy, restitution if it may be to a certain degree for the wrongs of centuries—we know that the success of our struggle cannot be long delayed. Even now we see in the

distance the dawn of other ideals which we as a nation, strengthened by our union, may strive after together? 'The progress of all through all, the service of all by all'—are not these the principles of Liberalism, and does not the present crisis emphasize and drive them home, and purify our politics of any lower aims?" With all this there was no avoidance of the Irish question. Mr. Morley had said at the Conference: "They taunt us with having Irish allies. Certainly, and we are glad of it. Don't they see that their reproach against us for working with the Irish members, for treating them as we treat the Scotch or Welsh or English members, that every one of these reproaches is stereotyping and perpetuating the bad, the wicked old notion, that the Irish are inferior to ourselves." Mr. H. H. Fowler reminded the delegates that two years before, in the meeting at Leeds, they had passed a resolution which said that the only alternative to the Liberal policy was Coercion. "It was prophecy then," he said, "now it is history." Mr. Waddy, who had been to Mitchelstown, and most carefully examined the spot where the young man Lonergan was shot, said that he had tested the excuse put forward by the Government for the police, and he said deliberately that the shooting of Lonergan was as clear and provable a murder as had ever reddened the earth's soil since Cain slew Abel. Sir Wilfrid Lawson turned the talk of the disintegration of the Liberal party to ridicule. "An old gentleman in my county was making a speech the other night, and said he had lived through two sunsets, three convulsions, and a deluge, and he thought he could now stand a disintegration."

At the second sitting of the Conference Sir William Harcourt confirmed what Mr. Morley had said about the change in the Liberal party, which the secession of Lord Hartington and his Whig friends had made. "I think it extremely likely that the Liberal party is going to be unmuzzled. I don't say that we have not among us—I am proud to think we have—many members of the old Whig

aristocracy. We have Lord Spencer, who was here to-day. We have Lord Rosebery, we have my friend Lord Ripon, and we have Lord Kimberley. We have in the House of Lords, I think, a large proportion of those peers who are ex-Lord Lieutenants of Ireland. But what is going to be the consequence to the Liberal party, and to the political history of this country of the gulf fixed between the Whig aristocracy and the Liberal party. Why you know very well that it will, that it must, give an immense impulse to the democratic party in this country." At the great meeting of from fifteen thousand to eighteen thousand persons held in Bingley Hall at night, Mr. Gladstone spoke for an hour and fifty minutes, and the whole audience felt that they had listened to one of his greatest orations. He went through the whole question of Mr. Balfour's administration of the Coercion Act, repeated the motto, "Remember Mitchelstown," showed photographs which disproved Mr. Balfour's statement that Loneragan, "a martyr to his country," as Mr. Gladstone called him, was killed by a ricochet or rebounding shot. He passed in review the Killeagh cases, and the verdict on Mr. Mandeville, and then addressed himself to the political aspects of the question, asked what the Dissentients had to propose, rebuked Lord Hartington's outrageous language, and concluded with an incident which illustrated the new feeling of sympathy for England which was arising in Ireland :—

In the county, I think, of Limerick, not very many days ago, an Englishman was addressing a crowd of Irish Nationalists on the subject of Home Rule. His carriage, or his train, whichever it was, was just going to depart. Some one cried out "God save Ireland," and there was a loud burst of cheering. The train started, the cheering subsided. Another voice from the crowd was raised, and shouted, "And God save England"—(loud cheers)—and there were cheers louder still—(prolonged cheering)—cheers louder still, such as in the language of Shakespeare, that

" Make the welkin ring again,  
And fetch shrill echoes from the hollow earth."

(Loud cheers.) These cheers were the genuine expression of the



sentiment of the country. They, our opponents, teach you to rely on the use of this deserted and enfeebled and superannuated—(cheers and laughter)—weapon of Coercion. (Hear, hear.) We teach you to rely upon Irish affection and goodwill. We teach you not to speculate on the formation of that sentiment. We show you that it is formed already—it is in full force ; it is ready to burst forth from every Irish heart, and through every Irish voice. (Cheers.) We only beseech you, by resolute persistence in that policy you have adopted, to foster, to cherish, to consolidate that sentiment, and so to act that in space it shall spread from the North of Ireland to the South, and from the West of Ireland to the East, and in time it shall extend and endure from this present date until the last of the years and the last of the centuries that may still be reserved in the counsels of Providence to work out the destinies of mankind.

Mr. Gladstone had not delivered so great a speech as this since the one in which he introduced the Home Rule Bill. Expository and argumentative as it was, it held the close attention of his audience all through its course. When he sat down the immense assembly burst into round after round of applause, so prolonged, so continuous that some of the spectators noted that it lasted nine minutes. On the next day an Irish deputation visited Mr. Gladstone, and he made another speech, which he concluded by saying : “ The residue of my life is the property of Ireland, as far as it may be made use of for the attainment of the great object we have in view.” Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone then went to West Bromwich, where numerous addresses were presented to them, and Mr. Gladstone made a short speech on “ one man, one vote.” Here they were joined by Mr. Philip Stanhope and his wife the Countess Tolstoi, and drove for fourteen miles through the towns and villages of the Black Country to their house at Wombourne. It was a sort of popular triumph all the way. The Correspondent of *The Daily News*, after describing the decorations of the houses, said : “ But the most striking of all was the greeting the people gave him. Poor women, with shawls over their heads and babies in their arms ran with the carriages till they were breathless. The men, or such of them as were not at work, shouted their heartiest welcome.

The children and young folks were full of gleeful welcome, and the procession was never clear of a joyous crowd for the whole of the fourteen miles drive." On the next day there was a great demonstration, presided over by Mr. Henry Fowler, when Mr. Gladstone passed through Wolverhampton, where he made a brief speech. At Banbury and some other stations on the way to Oxford, where he spent the Sunday, there were also enthusiastic crowds. This journey practically closed the autumn campaign on the Liberal side. Mr. Goschen went down to West Bromwich a week later to reply to Mr. Gladstone, and on the 16th of November Mr. Balfour, speaking at Leeds, said that Lord Spencer had left no record of his interference with the prison treatment of Mr. T. Harrington, and that his successors in office had therefore no means of learning that it had been made.

Parliament reassembled on the 6th of November. After it had spent a few days in Supply Mr. W. H. Smith announced a Bill for granting a further sum of five millions to extend the operations of the Irish Land Purchase Act. The Bill was introduced on the 19th and was met by Mr. Gladstone with an amendment urging that instead of voting the five millions "it is expedient, especially in view of the lamentable sufferings caused by recent evictions in Ireland to extend the provisions of the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887, so as to empower the Land Court to reduce or cancel the arrears of rents found to be excessive, as well as to deal with the rents themselves, after the example of the legislation recently and beneficially applied to the crofters' holdings in Scotland." The urgent need of Ireland at that moment, he said, was the dealing with these arrears. In the case of the Scottish crofters the Courts had been empowered to deal with arrears and had in many cases gone far towards cancelling them. In Ireland the whole of the judicial rents had been reduced, but the arrears of rents thus declared to be too high had not been touched. They still hung over the people's heads and

were being used for the purpose of evicting them before the reduction in the judicial rents took practical effect. Mr. William O'Brien showed that in the first nine months of the year 10,367 tenants had been deprived of their share in their holdings as compared with 3,781 in the year 1886. He would gladly abandon the Plan of Campaign, he said, if the Government would give them a decent Court of Arbitration to take its place. The discussion was continued a second night and the amendment was rejected by 330 to 246, a majority of 84. Of the Dissident Liberals 52 voted with the Government and not one with their former friends. The Government then hurried on the Bill. It was printed before leave had been given to introduce it; the second reading was moved in dumb show within twelve hours of the first reading, and Mr. Parnell made a striking speech in the course of the debate. The Bill had been brought forward, he said, not to relieve the tenants but to help the landlords. "We hear of the Duke of Abercorn's estates being disposed of to his thriving Ulster tenants, and of the great London Companies absconding with I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of this money, but we do not hear of a single estate in the congested districts of Ireland, where all the crime has taken place, where the people have been driven by desperation and starvation to those deeds of blood which have shocked and horrified everybody, we do not hear of one of those estates being brought within the Bill that is to restore peace to Ireland. Let us clear our minds of cant. Let the House vote the money for the landlords with its eyes open." He wished that the poor Irish cottiers should have such advantages given them as had been given to the Scottish crofters, whose judicial rents had been reduced thirty per cent. instead of the Irish nineteen and a half per cent., and who had sixty per cent. struck off their arrears, instead of being left, as the Irish were, without help. Lord Randolph Churchill spoke against the Bill, but ended by saying it was so small a Bill, and so



unlikely to be made a precedent, that he should vote for it. Mr. Goschen admitted that it could not become a precedent and should not be repeated, and Sir William Harcourt said he agreed with the whole of Lord R. Churchill's speech except the conclusion. The second reading was carried by 299 to 224. Two amendments were made as it passed through Committee, Mr. W. Rathbone carrying a clause limiting the operation of the Act to farms under £3,000 in value, and Mr. Healy inserting a provision preventing any rent being demanded after the Land Commissioners had authorized the purchase of the holding. The third reading showed a reduced vote of 202 to 141. The House of Lords ran the Bill through in three sittings.

During these discussions an Irish constable, Jeremiah Sullivan, called at the House, sent in his card to Mr. Sheehy, and attempted to serve a summons upon him when he came out into the lobby. Mr. Bradlaugh recalled the promise of the Chief Secretary, that the seven members to be arrested should not be meddled with during the discussions on the Estimates, and Mr. Balfour first doubted the facts and then pleaded that he had no control over the matter, which he said was "a grievous and unhappy thing." Sir William Harcourt said either the Chief Secretary or the Home Secretary was responsible for these Irish policemen, and must be responsible for keeping them in order, and Mr. Balfour at once promised that no such incident should recur. A Committee was appointed to consider the matter and the House adjourned at half-past eight till ten o'clock, resuming business at that hour as if nothing had happened. Nothing ever did happen on the subject, for the Committee reported a fortnight later that nothing could be done, but that better instructions ought to have been given to the Irish Constabulary. As this was equivalent to blaming the Chief Secretary, the Government and its supporters refused to adopt the Report by 182 to 130. On the same day Mr. Balfour announced the release of Thomas Moroney, who had been twenty-two months in prison for contempt of

Court, committed by refusing to answer some questions as to the Plan of Campaign. On the next day, the 14th, the second reading of Mr. Stevenson's Sunday Closing Bill was rejected by 167 to 160, but an amendment by Mr. Labouchere for Local Option in Sunday Closing of Public Houses was adopted by 186 to 128. The Tithe Bills were withdrawn, two Irish Drainage Bills, the Trade Marks Bill, the Bill to establish a Ministry of Agriculture, and eventually the Employers' Liability Bill, shared the same fate.

There had been no by-elections between June and October, but at the end of October two Liberals competed for the seat at Merthyr Tydvil vacant by the death of Mr. Henry Richard. Mr. Richard was one of the great losses of the year. As an influential and representative Welshman, and a well-known and prominent Nonconformist, he had acquired a kind of double leadership, speaking in the House of Commons with a dignity and authority which made all parties listen with respect, while outside, both Welshmen and English Dissenters would have addressed him much as Sir Henry Vane the younger is addressed in Milton's sonnet—

Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,  
What severs each, thou hast learned, which few have done,  
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe,  
Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans  
In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.

The seat at Merthyr Tydvil was not challenged by the Ministerialists although two Liberals stood for it, Mr. Pritchard Morgan being preferred by a large majority. The vacancy at Dewsbury was caused by the retirement through ill-health of Sir John Simon, one of the earliest of the English Home Rulers, who had sat for the borough uninterruptedly for the whole twenty years since its enfranchisement. A great effort was made by the Ministerialists to diminish the Liberal majority, which was believed to owe its strength in 1886 to Sir John Simon's personal popu-

larity, and the high appreciation in which his long and faithful service to the Liberal party was held by his constituents. Mr. H. O. Arnold-Forster was the Ministerial champion, but Mr. Mark Oldroyd, the Liberal candidate, was returned by 6,071 to 3,969; a decrease in the majority of 256 votes. Colonel Duncan, the Tory member for the Holborn division of Finsbury, died on the day of the poll at Dewsbury. Colonel Duncan had been returned in 1885 by a majority of 1,574 over Mr. Charles Harrison, and in 1886 by 1,701 over a Parsee gentleman, Mr. Dadhabai Naoroji. Lord Compton came forward in the Liberal interest and Mr. Gainsford Bruce for the Tories, and after an exciting struggle, in which Mr. Bruce was obliged to promise that he would vote against Mr. Goschen's lingering proposal for a Van and Wheel Tax, he was returned by 4,398 to 3,433; a majority less by 736 than that of 1885. This election had two results. It gave the Van and Wheel Tax its death-blow, and it was the occasion of one of Lord Salisbury's "blazing indiscretions." In making the most of the Conservative victory he overlooked the great majority against Mr. C. Harrison, and spoke of Mr. Naoroji as virtually, though not literally, "a black man," for whom English electors could hardly be expected to vote. This glaring offence to the natives of India was happily given a ludicrous turn by the fact that Mr. Naoroji, "Lord Salisbury's Black Man," was, if anything, fairer in appearance than Lord Salisbury himself. The other by-elections of the year were at Maidstone, where Mr. John Barker reduced the Tory majority from 314 to 185; at Colchester, where Lord Brooke defeated Sir William Gordon by 439, an increase of 144 in the Tory majority; and at Stockton-on-Tees, where, after some Liberal divisions, Sir Horace Davey was returned by a majority of 395, a falling off of 607 from the Liberal majority of 1886. The balance of the by-elections of the whole year was in favour of the Liberals, who won one seat from the Conservatives and two from the Dissident Liberals, and lost one seat to a Dissident, leaving a



balance in favour of the Liberals of two seats, counting four on a division. As compared with 1886 the Ministerialists were now 383 instead of 394, and the Opposition 287 instead of 276; the Ministerial majority being thus reduced from 118 to 96.

The closing days of the Parliamentary Session found everybody tired, and the Ministerialists disheartened. On the 17th of December Lord Randolph Churchill quoted the statement made by Lord Salisbury in March, "I do not think the retention of Suakim is any advantage to the Egyptian Government; speaking from the point of view of that Government's interests, I should say 'Abandon Suakim. at once,'" and asked why the Government now intended to impose on the revenues of Egypt the whole or any part of the cost recently incurred in defending Suakim. Sir James Fergusson replied that the words quoted expressed only the private opinion of Lord Salisbury. Mr. John Morley said that so extraordinary an answer had seldom or ever been given, for Lord Salisbury had expressed the opinion when answering the question of one of his supporters in the House of Lords. Lord Salisbury, however, had added that the retention of Suakim was of advantage in giving us the means of suppressing the Slave Trade, and this was the excuse of a policy which appeared at first to threaten to involve us in a new conquest of the Soudan, or at least in an effort "to crush Mahdism." The Government were saved from this rashness by the energetic protests of the Opposition; and the Prime Minister, in a speech at Scarborough on the 19th of December, pleaded that Mr. Gladstone had given the Egyptians a pledge not to give up any ports on the Red Sea, and that the Government would therefore hold Suakim, but would not undertake any expedition to the interior. The Session was one of the longest ever held, and closed only on Christmas Eve, the Queen's Speech appearing in the morning papers on Christmas Day. It told of the rejection of the Fisheries Convention, and the

adoption of temporary arrangements; of the attacks on Suakim and their repulse; of the naval blockade together with Germany of a part of the East African coast to check an insurrection of the Slave Traders, and of a rising of some Zulu chiefs who were awaiting their trial. The only measure thought worthy of mention as the result of a Session of unparalleled length was the Local Government Bill. All the other promises made in the Speech delivered ten months and a half before had come to nothing.

In London the year had been characterized by the new zeal and energy of the Liberal party under the effective guidance of the London Liberal and Radical Union. This activity—largely aided by the wide circulation of the new halfpenny evening newspaper, established by Mr. T. P. O'Connor under the name of *The Star*—awoke fresh interest in political and social questions among the working men of London. The Executive Committee of the Union elaborated a series of measures which were called the London Liberal programme, and Professor Stuart took the lead in urging it in the London constituencies. The Liberal leaders responded promptly to their efforts, and in December Mr. John Morley made a great speech at the Foresters' Hall in Central London, and three days later, on Saturday, the 15th, Mr. Gladstone followed it up by a visit to the East end and a speech in Limehouse Town Hall. Both these speeches were memorable. Mr. Morley's Clerkenwell programme and Mr. Gladstone's Limehouse proposals became the rallying points of London Liberalism, and were adopted by the whole Liberal party.

Mr. Morley, after speaking of the Suakim Expedition, and saying that the spirit of the Carolina slaveholder was at the bottom of the Unionist policy in Ireland, passed to London matters. He pictured two Londons, one sitting enthroned at the gates of the sea, the mighty centre—commercial, financial, political, social, and intellectual—of a vast realm where English laws, English institutions, the English tongue and all the treasures of English literature

reign, and govern and enrich the lives and minds of millions of men, all over the globe, with a sovereignty which seems imperishable and destined never to pass away. But there was another side. "I am tempted to recall," said Mr. Morley, "when I first came, a great many years ago, as a very young man to London. I had chambers—not having, any more than you have, too much of the superfluities of life—I had chambers in one of those old lawyers' Inns, looking on to one of the Holborn courts, I suppose not more than a mile or a mile and a half from here. I shall never forget, I can never forget, the doings of that London court, while I was endeavouring to read. The horrors of life under my window would have impressed themselves on any man's mind, and when I go about other parts of London now, I have that in my recollection, and I know and I see that what then used to haunt me is still a type of far too large an area of this great city." London now could have anything it liked. What had the Liberal party promised it? "Well, I see that the Liberal party has pledged itself to Free Schools, and I rejoice to see the very remarkable fact that twenty-one out of the members elected to the School Board are pledged to Free Schools. Next was the utilization of the great London endowments; and then the taxation of the ground landlord for local purposes; the control of the Police, the reform of the system of leaseholds, improved methods of registration, 'one man, one vote,' proposed by the veteran reformer Major Cartwright in the early part of the present century, and shorter Parliaments; these were the chief points of the Clerkenwell programme."

Mr. Gladstone's visit to the East end of London was on Saturday afternoon, the 15th of December. He drove in an open carriage through a gloomy fog, but received a cheering popular welcome. The day had marked another step in the severance of the Dissident Liberals from the Liberal party in the announcement made that morning, that Lord Hartington and about 130 others had announced their secession from the National Liberal Club. Mr.



Gladstone said in reference to this secession—"The Dissident Liberals are men of honour and men of ability—I do not question either the one or the other for a moment—but I do not admit that they are a political party in the country. I will tell you what they are. They are officers without an army, they are clergymen without a church." Passing on to reprehend Lord Salisbury's insult to the people of India in calling Mr. Naoroji a black man ; then protesting against the fighting at Suakim, describing the block in the House of Commons and the waste of seven nights on a proposal to create a new Parliamentary office in Ireland, of eight nights in cramming the Commission inquiry down Mr. Parnell's throat, and of eight nights more in passing a Bill to give bad landlords in Ireland power to compel their ruined tenants to buy, he passed on to the English subjects which were waiting to be dealt with. These were, the whole subject of Registration, including "one man, one vote," the shortening of Parliaments, the rating of ground-rents, the enfranchisement of leaseholds, the completion of Local Government in London, and the granting to the London County Council the management of the Police. "There are three other questions which I must mention," he said, "and I am not now arguing so much as reciting, questions of great interest. There is the question of Artisans Dwellings, there is the question of Free Schools, and there is the question of what is termed Disestablishment in Scotland and in Wales. I mention these questions because I am speaking of subjects which seem to me to be ripe for public discussion." But all these subjects, and others such as the Employers' Liabilities Bill, were, he said, "like a great collection of ripe fruit gathered together ready to be plucked from the trees in a splendid garden ; but that garden is surrounded by a high wall which nobody can scale, and as to the doors of it, the keys have been lost or have not yet been found. That is the case with all these questions in the lump. You may be able to make an occasional exception, but with regard to the most and the bulk of them, that is

the state of things. Now what does my high wall mean? My high wall means the Irish question. Until you either pull down the wall or find the keys and open the door, you will never bring the course of British legislation to what it ought to be." The rest of the speech was devoted to the Irish question, and concluded with the words, "Let us persevere in this good cause, this great cause. We are cheered on from year to year, and from month to month, by the increasing adherence of the nation ; and we cling to it with our hearts and with our souls because it is the cause of honour, it is the cause of loyalty, it is the cause of patriotism, it is the cause of strength, the cause of union, the cause of peace."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*A YEAR OF MOVEMENT.*

THE shadow of the weary inquiry in the Commission Court lay heavily on the political world when the new year 1889 came in. The Tory party and their Liberal allies had begun to suspect that the Campaign of Calumny had been overdone, and it was with them as Nerissa says, "they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing." Mr. Bright was lying seriously ill at his Rochdale home, and though he was better on New Year's Day, there was no prospect of his recovery. The year opened badly in Ireland. On the last day of the old year Mr. Edward Harrington had been tried before two Resident Magistrates on three charges; first, of taking part in a meeting of the National League; secondly, of having published a report of the meeting in *The Kerry Sentinel*, and thirdly, having incited persons to join the Plan of Campaign. Mr. Harrington was convicted on the second count, that of publishing a report of a meeting, and for this "crime" was sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour. On New Year's Day Mr. John Finucane, M.P., and Mr. John McInerney, were prosecuted for criminal conspiracy in trying to induce a man not to take a farm. Mr. Finucane was found guilty of the conspiracy and sentenced to four months imprisonment, but Mr. McInerney, with whom Mr. Finucane was found guilty of conspiring, was found not guilty, as it was not proved that he was present at the meeting at which Mr. Finucane had conspired with him. Mr. Condon, M.P., who was



installed as Mayor of Clonmel on New Year's Day, was served with four summonses for criminal conspiracy to induce certain cattle dealers, whose names were unknown, not to deal with an Emergency man named Tobin. On the same day preparations were made to begin a series of evictions on the Olphert Estate near Falcarragh. The tenants had barricaded their houses and a gang of Emergency men had been sent to the scene with crowbars and battering ram. On the second of January the evictions began, and the whole day was spent in obtaining possession of a single house. For this one eviction 200 military and police were employed. The house was that of Patrick O'Donnell, a blacksmith, and in preparing for its defence he had built up the doors and lower windows, converted the upper windows into loop-holes, and provisioned it for a siege. When a group of eight Emergency men approached the house they were met with a volley of stones and compelled to retreat. Time after time the defence proved too strong for the attack. Looking on from the heights around the house were a thousand people, who cheered at every repulse of the enemy, and who were only kept back by a squadron of military and police. The fight continued for several hours, and some wounds were inflicted on both sides. At length the Resident Magistrate read the Riot Act and authorized the soldiers to fire into the dwelling. A popular priest then came forward and persuaded the garrison to surrender. At his urgent entreaty they came out of the house, and were marched off to prison. This was only one of many such evictions in various parts of Ireland. Violent scenes like this went on day after day till so much feeling was aroused in England, Wales and Scotland that an outcry was raised against Mr. Balfour's administration among his own supporters, but for a time was raised in vain.

At home, the chief interest of the hour was the election of the new County Councils in London and the rural districts. In the English counties the members of the new

Councils were principally chosen from the classes who under the old system had had the management of the county affairs. In Wales the ratepayers chose the Councillors from amongst themselves, and all the Welsh County Councils but one were composed of Liberals. In London the result of the elections astonished politicians on both sides. Each Parliamentary constituency in London had to choose two members, and there was much difference of opinion whether the election should be conducted on political issues. It is usually inevitable that municipal elections should turn on Imperial politics. Men naturally know best the men with whom they are accustomed to work, and in proposing candidates for local governing bodies, they look to the men they know, who are usually their political friends. Their political association draws them together, and they consequently act together in matters which may be outside of politics. This happened to a large extent in London. The County Council candidates, whether they appealed to the constituency on political grounds or not, necessarily depended upon the votes of the persons with whom they were politically associated. The elections therefore assumed a political character, in spite of some efforts on both sides to dissociate them from politics. Moreover, the New London Liberal programme dealt with municipal questions, and the election really turned on the issue—on which the Tories were on one side and the Liberals on the other—whether London should be kept in leading strings or should have one great central municipality of its own, with powers like those possessed by the great municipal corporations of the kingdom. The consequence was that though the London constituencies had returned a majority of Tories in 1885, and a still larger Tory majority in 1886, they elected a Liberal County Council in 1889. This result was probably due almost entirely to the energetic efforts of the London Liberal and Radical Union. London was to be restored to its old Liberal leadership in national politics, by the

strong desire of the people for municipal self-government. Of 118 members chosen by the 58 constituencies, 70 were Liberals, and in favour of the rapid and complete development of self-government in London. Among the members returned were Lord Rosebery, Sir John Lubbock, Lord Monkswell, Mr. J. B. Firth, and Mr. John Burns. Miss Cobden was elected for Bow and Bromley, and Lady Sandhurst for Brixton, but Lady Sandhurst was afterwards declared ineligible and the seat was given to her defeated competitor, Mr. Beresford Hope. The Council met on the 31st of January with Sir John Lubbock as temporary Chairman. On the fifth of February nineteen Aldermen were chosen, among whom were Lord Meath, Lord Hobhouse, Lord Lingen, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Sir T. H. Farrer, and Miss Emma Cons. At the next meeting Lord Rosebery was elected Chairman and Sir John Lubbock Vice-chairman. The Council has power to pay the Deputy-chairman, and it appointed Mr. J. B. Firth, at a salary of £2,000 a year.

The first by-election of the year inspired the Liberal party as much as the County Council election in London. Sir William Pearce, whose death caused a vacancy in the Govan Division of Lanarkshire, had been returned in the Tory interest in 1885 by a majority of 155, and in 1886 by a majority of 362. In the ballot on the 18th of January the candidates were Sir John Pender, a Dissident Liberal, who had the whole Tory vote, and Mr. John Wilson, a Liberal. Sir John Pender polled 3,349, only 225 less than Sir William Pearce, but Mr. John Wilson received 4,420 votes, making a Liberal majority of 1,071. This decisive result was probably due in a large degree to the evictions and the imprisonments that were going on in Ireland. Mr. Balfour replied to it by increasing the rigour of his administration. On the twenty-first of January Mr. David Sheehy, M.P., who had been addressing meetings for the Liberal candidate in the Govan Division, was arrested in Glasgow, as he was starting from St. Enoch's Hotel to address a



Liberal meeting at Nairn. This carrying out of the Coercion Act in the commercial capital of Scotland brought home to Scotsmen what the Government of Ireland was like. Thousands assembled at the Caledonian Railway station to cheer and encourage Mr. Balfour's "criminal," but Mr. Sheehy was taken off by another route, and the assembled people passed a resolution protesting against the insult offered to the Scottish people by such an arrest on Scottish soil. On the twenty-second of January Mr. John Morley addressed a large meeting in Sheffield. In the course of his address he gave a little chronicle from *The Times* of one day's work in Ireland on the fifteenth of January. First, a motion in the Exchequer Court to test the legality of the conviction of a member of Parliament; second, an application in another court to commit a member of Parliament for contempt of court for giving certain advice to tenants; third, the committal of a newspaper reporter to prison for refusing to give evidence in the same case; fourth, a violent and defiant speech by a member of Parliament; fifth, the trial of a constable for murder committed during a conflict with the police; sixth, the arrest of a man who was sentenced to six weeks imprisonment by a Coercion Court for conspiring not to pay what they call a "blood tax"; seventh, forty-two prisoners, whose offence had been connected with the Falcarragh evictions, were marched from Derry Gaol to the station amid the loud cheering of the crowd; eighth,—“I am not sure,” said Mr. Morley, “that this is not one of the most important of all—two men had agreed to purchase an evicted farm, one of them had deposited a portion of the purchase-money, yet, so great was the influence of opinion, so striking, as we are told by *The Times* correspondent, was the terrorism, that he thought it best to sacrifice his deposit; ninth, at Waterford seventeen young men, who had belonged to a drum-and-fife band, and who had gone in some sort of procession to attend a demonstration in favour of what they called the Tullamore martyrs, were

brought up for rioting and assaulting the police ; fifteen of these men—I don't say whether rightly or wrongly—were committed to terms of imprisonment ; they were obliged to have a hundred police to take them to the station, and they were followed all through by a dense enthusiastic crowd of spectators and admirers. Now those nine items for one day may seem to you to be not very important, but mark, in every one of these instances there was a conflict between public opinion and the administration of the law that illustrates the alienation of public opinion in Ireland." On the same day on which Mr. Morley spoke, Mr. Richard Chamberlain, in presiding at the dinner of the National Union Club, spoke of "the gentle Coercion of Mr. Balfour," which he said was successful. His brother, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, addressing his constituents at Birmingham on the next day, spoke of an improved condition of things in Ireland, which he attributed, "in the first place, to the wise and firm and resolute administration of Mr. Balfour."

The wisdom and the firmness and the resolution were being shown in a multitude of instances. Towards the end of January there were serious disturbances at Skibbereen, arising out of the prosecution of Father McCarthy. Long processions of people came into the town, and some baton charges were made by the police. At Kildare, warrants were issued for the arrest of Mr. Carew, M.P., and Mr. Denis Kilbride, M.P. Mr. Kilbride was afterwards sentenced to three months imprisonment. At Carrick-on-Suir Mr. William O'Brien was brought up on two summonses before Mr. Bodkin and Mr. Considine, Resident Magistrates. The first charge was that in a speech he had taken part in a criminal conspiracy to induce certain persons unknown not to take land from which tenants had been evicted ; the second charge was that, on the same occasion, he took part in a criminal conspiracy having the same object. Mr. O'Brien was met at the station by large crowds with bands, who escorted him to the Town Hall.

From the Town Hall he proceeded with Mr. Healy, his Counsel, and some members of the Town Council to the Court House, but across the street was a line of policemen, with fixed bayonets, who refused to let him go whither the law had summoned him to appear. Mr. O'Brien tried to pass, but was seized and dragged roughly about, and one policeman attempted to stab Mr. Healy with his bayonet. The police at length found out their ridiculous mistake, but made no apology for their violence. At the Court House itself, an attempt was made to clear out the people. This led to a riot, in the midst of which Mr. O'Brien left the court, and could not afterwards be found. At night there was serious rioting in the streets. On the next day the trial went on in Mr. O'Brien's absence, and he was sentenced to four months imprisonment. Mr. O'Brien had escaped to England, and on Tuesday evening, the 29th of January, appeared at a meeting of Mr. Jacob Bright's constituents in Manchester. He arrived while the chairman was speaking, and his appearance on the platform was the signal for a great burst of enthusiasm. He told the people that if he were a political refugee from any other land under the sun except Ireland, he could claim the rights of inviolable sanctuary on the soil of England, but he was only an Irishman, striving with all his might to unite and knit together the hearts of these two nations. That night, as soon as that meeting was over, he could be dragged through the midst of their great city, and from the heart of that great free land he would be handed over to Mr. Balfour, to be subjected to the miserable little torments and all sorts of defilements with which it seemed to be his delight to pollute the men whom he could not conquer. Immediately after the meeting Mr. O'Brien was arrested, and the next day, having slept in the Mayor's private apartments and been treated with all possible courtesy by the Manchester authorities, he was sent off to Dublin, cheering crowds greeting him at many stations on the way.

Mr. O'Brien's anticipation of the miserable little tor-



ments to which Mr. Balfour would subject him was realized at once. On arriving at Clonmel Prison at three o'clock in the morning, he was placed in the quarter for untried prisoners, and slept and rested well. Later in the day the prison doctor came, and soon after he had left, the Governor and some warders made their appearance. The Governor told Mr. O'Brien to put on the prison clothes, but he refused, and the warders then seized him and tried to strip him. Mr. O'Brien resisted, but after a while fainted. During the fainting fit his hair was cut in prison fashion, his beard was clipped, his clothes were removed and the prison suit was put on. A visiting justice arriving soon afterwards, found him utterly exhausted. When he recovered he took off the prison dress, and remained without any other covering than his shirt. At night two warders brought him the plank bed, with quilt, sheet, and blanket; but in the early morning these were taken from him by main force, and he was left to his nakedness. After a visit from the doctor, however, the bed-clothes and a mattress were brought to him, and he wrapped himself up in the blanket, but entirely refused to wear the prison clothes. The news of these indignities created much excitement all over the country. The Lord Mayor of Dublin telegraphed to the Chief Secretary, and receiving no reply sent him a letter, calling his attention to the critical condition to which, as he understood, Mr. O'Brien had been reduced. On the next evening Mr. Balfour, speaking at a dinner at the Ancient Concert Room in Dublin, referred to these communications, and said that when he received the Lord Mayor's telegram, he requested that it should be docketed, and preserved amongst the archives as a specimen of the taste and accuracy of the communications which might come from the chief office of the municipality of the chief city of Ireland, and having done so, "I went to bed," he said, "and slept the sleep of the just."

The day after the Chief Secretary had enjoyed this

unearned share of the "balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course," a terrible calamity occurred at Gweedore. A warrant had been issued against Father McFadden, the priest of the parish, and the police determined to execute it on Sunday morning. During the service a body of police, under the orders of District Inspector Martin, posted themselves at the chapel door, intending to arrest the priest as he returned from mass. In his address to the people in the chapel, Father McFadden exhorted them to be quiet and peaceable whatever might happen to him. When the congregation broke up, they waited outside to watch events, and when Father McFadden appeared, and the police stepped forward to arrest him, the people by an irresistible impulse rushed forward to save him. In the confusion Father McFadden ran to his house, the police following him. As he was going up the steps, Inspector Martin caught him by the coat, when the maddened people threw stones at the officer, and killed him. The fatal result of this act of police indiscretion—if indeed the attempt to arrest a priest on Sunday morning amongst the very people in whose presence he had been celebrating the mass, should not be called a crime—intensified feeling on both sides all over the country. Later in the year, Father McFadden was put on his trial for murder, but was found guilty of manslaughter, and only asked to come up for sentence if called upon. In an address to his constituents on the next day, Mr. John Morley said, "this dreadful catastrophe took place within a very few hours of the time at which the Chief Secretary had been congratulating himself and his audience on the state of Ireland." Mr. Morley said that he condemned and deplored the whole scene; but the Liberal party did not stop with condemnation. They said "Let us go to the root of these dismal tragedies, let us change the system, let us bring these popular chiefs, like Father McFadden, over to order and law and government and peace."

Meanwhile a great movement had sprung up all over

England. Every Liberal Association in the country met and passed resolutions against the treatment of Mr. O'Brien ; and great meetings were held in all the chief towns. The General Committee of the National Liberal Federation met at the National Liberal Club, and passed a series of resolutions. A National Protest was associated with and based upon a series of resolutions, in which Mr. Frederic Harrison re-stated the principles on which all freedom rests. In the course of a few weeks this Protest received a quarter of a million of signatures, and on the 13th of March a great meeting was held at St. James's Hall to protest against the harsh treatment of the political prisoners in Ireland, at which Mr. Morley took the chair, Mr. Parnell was present and spoke, and Mr. Frederic Harrison's resolutions were passed. Mr. Balfour so far bent before the storm that Mr. O'Brien's clothes were restored to him, but the startling exposures in the Commission Court only seemed to make the Chief Secretary more anxious to show that he still did not flinch, though the Coercionist Coalitionists had been ignominiously driven from their refuges of lies.

Parliament assembled on the 21st February, the very day on which Richard Pigott began his astounding admissions before the Commission. The Queen's Speech opened with a brief reference to the disturbance near Suakim, the negotiations with Thibet, and the Conference at Berlin upon the affairs of Samoa, in which this country had consented to take part. There was a hint at a large demand of money for national defence. "The unceasing expenditure upon warlike preparation which has been incurred by other European nations," said the Speech, "has rendered necessary an increase in the precautions which have hitherto been taken for the safety of our shores and our commerce." The promises of legislation were few, the omitted portions of the Local Government Bill were to be brought up again, as well as a Local Government Bill for Scotland ; measures were promised "for developing the material resources of



Ireland, and for amending the constitution of the various tribunals which have special jurisdiction over real property in that country." There was a hint at the salutary results of Irish Coercion, at which, when the speech was read in the Commons, the Irish members laughed. A Bill for carrying out Baron de Worms's Sugar Convention, and one for restoring the gold coinage, were promised, as well as legislation arising out of the Report of the Commission on Civil Establishments. One paragraph of the Speech must be given in full: "Several subjects which I have commended to your care in previous years, but which the increasing burden of your duties has shut out from consideration, will be submitted to you again. In this number will be included measures relating to Tithes, for the regulation of the Universities of Scotland, for determining the liability of Employers in the case of accidents, for establishing a Department of Agriculture, for cheapening the transfer of land, and for remedying abuses attaching to Joint Stock Companies formed under Limited Liability."

The first business in the House of Commons, as had now become usual, was the reading by the Speaker of letters from Irish Magistrates, announcing the imprisonment of members of Parliament. This time there were three: Mr. E. Harrington, imprisoned for six months with hard labour, Mr. Finucane for one month, and Mr. William O'Brien, who had been doubly sentenced to four months imprisonment and six months imprisonment. Mr. John Morley at once threw down the challenge of the Opposition by giving notice of an amendment to the Address, "Humbly to represent to your Majesty, that the present system of administration in Ireland is harsh, oppressive and unjust, that it violates the rights and alienates the affections of your Majesty's Irish subjects, and is viewed with reprobation and aversion by the people of Great Britain, and also to represent to your Majesty that such measures of conciliation should be adopted as may bring about the contentment of the Irish people and establish a real union between

Great Britain and Ireland." The giving of this notice had been preceded by a meeting of the leaders of the Opposition at Lord Spencer's house, at which the challenge was resolved upon. The point which it was especially necessary to raise was the treatment of Mr. O'Brien and his fellow prisoners. Lord Granville mentioned the subject in the House of Lords in the debate on the Address. Speaking of the struggle over Mr. O'Brien's clothes he said, "Considering that going to prison confers great honour upon an Irishman and places him on a pedestal, not only in Ireland but in the great cities of this country, I should have thought he would have considered prison clothes as robes of honour. Mr. Balfour is in a difficult, I think almost an impossible position, but I think he makes the difficulties even greater than they are. I think it was Mr. Chamberlain who said that measures of repression were painful incidents to the Liberal party, and were much to be deplored; I believe that that is the opinion of the Government, but I think it is a great pity that the Government should give some sanction to the opposite idea, by members of it afterwards treating those cases as the subject of a somewhat forced hilarity. I saw the other day that a great scene took place in prison, and Mr. Balfour, speaking at the Mansion House, said that the prisons were not under his control, it was not his duty to interfere in any details; but when cases arose which might have political results it became his duty to look into the matter, and Mr. Balfour did do this, because he boasted that he had penned a somewhat cynical minute to the effect that if Mr. O'Brien chose to go without his clothes he must bear the consequences. But two days afterwards, a complete change takes place, and Mr. O'Brien is placed in comparative luxury." On the next night Mr. Parnell interposed in the debate on the Address in the House of Commons to call attention to the treatment of Mr. Carew. He read a telegram to the effect that on his arrival at Kilkenny Prison on the night before, Mr. Carew was forcibly deprived of his clothes (here the

Ministerialists burst into laughter), even to his flannel shirt ; " his hair and moustache were cut off ; he has been all day lying on a plank bed ; he refuses to wear the prison garb." Mr. Balfour, who only came in while Mr. Parnell was speaking, replied, amid loud laughter from his supporters, that such a man ought not to be described as one who was deprived of his clothes, he was a man who deprived himself of his clothes. Sir George Trevelyan said Mr. Carew belonged to the best kind of the young members of Parliament, that he was arrested at the house of a candidate at a by-election, and that he had been subjected to indignities which he would not comment upon, out of respect for the House of Commons, because it might raise laughter in a certain quarter of the House.

In moving his amendment on the 25th of February, Mr. John Morley made a searching review of Mr. Balfour's administration, and gave some instances of police oppression, which he said were almost incredible. " At Tralee, in February, for cheering Mr. O'Brien, two men were sentenced in default of bail to a month's imprisonment ; Mr. Cecil Roche told the people they must clearly understand that cheering a person being conveyed to gaol was illegal and could not be tolerated. Well, I submit," said Mr. Morley, " that that is not the law in England, and that no Home Secretary or Magistrate would venture to act as if it were the law." Another person, charged with hissing Mr. Cecil Roche, was sentenced to three months imprisonment in default of sureties to keep the peace ; at Ennis, on the 10th of February, two young men were charged with obstructing a constable, the obstruction consisted in their laughing at him while they were talking together ; the defendants denied that they laughed, but the Magistrate sentenced them to three months imprisonment in default of bail." Mr. Morley only briefly referred to the thought that was in everybody's mind, " You hoped that you were going to destroy their leader, but I am not sure that their leader will not destroy you." He concluded by saying " There is



one chapter in the history of the administration during the last three or four months, into which when the proper time comes—and I have no intention of anticipating it—we shall have to make a sharp and searching inquisition. We shall want to know whether it is true—and if it be true, on what principle it is—that officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary, in receipt of public money, have acted as collectors of evidence in the interests of one party in a great process now going on. We shall want to know whether it is true that Resident Magistrates, in receipt of public pay, assisted or were present at the taking of evidence for this great process, either in Ireland or London. We shall want to know whether any one in the position of a Crown Solicitor has acted as a paid agent in an inquiry relating to crime in his own country, and whether such action is compatible with his position. We shall want to know whether Government officers have handed over secret and important documents, the property of the Government, to private individuals, for use in making a case against certain persons. We shall want to know all these things and all else that you have done in furtherance of what may prove to have been an imposture and a plot of which you have, or may prove to have, fatuously made yourselves the dupes and the accessories.”

Mr. Balfour rose when Mr. Morley sat down. He was met with loud cries of “Pigott”; but began his defence gaily. His waste-paper basket, he said, had been filled day after day with resolutions embodying the most horrible charges against him and his colleagues, charges of cruelty—(loud cheers)—charges of brutality—(loud cheers)—charges of cynical savagery (loud cheers). “These charges were made in the recess, and they are cheered now. I am attacked for having jested over the sufferings of Mr. O’Brien. Sir, I have never jested over them, but as I am challenged, I do not conceal from the House my opinion that a great deal of what is going on is utterly absurd and unworthy of grave consideration, although I have always endeavoured to

treat it gravely." Mr. Balfour contended that Ireland was improving under his administration. Mr. Dillon replied that the improvement in Ireland was due in great degree to the successful working of the Plan of Campaign, but still more to the hopes with which Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party had inspired the Irish people. On a later evening Mr Chamberlain spoke. He said, "The charges as to the administration of the law might justify the removal of judges and magistrates, but not the removal of the Government." He thought Mr. Harrington had been very harshly treated, and suggested that his was a case in which the clemency of the Crown might be exercised. On the last night of the debate Mr. Gladstone, referring to the Liberal Unionists, said, "The present votes of that portion of the House of Commons are matters of extreme interest and importance ; we have looked for them with the utmost anxiety, we admit the vast effect which they have produced ; we recognize the fact that they are the true pillar, the only effectual main stay of the present policy, and recognizing their power, we pay them the compliment which is their due." Passing on to discuss the condition of Ireland, he said, "We challenge most of all the doctrine laid down by the Government, and frankly avowed by the Irish Secretary, that Ireland is best governed by Coercion." Mr. Chamberlain "no doubt cherishes the hope that there may be some period between this and the Day of Judgment when the Coercion Act may be repealed, but for Ireland as she is, he frankly holds out Coercion as the system of government." After discussing the treatment of Irish political prisoners, Mr. Gladstone said, "I do not know whether the House recollects that this subject was handled by Lord Byron in satiric verse on the occasion of the imprisonment of Sir John Hobhouse. Lord Byron wrote, 'Let Parliament send you to Newgate, and Newgate will send you to Parliament.' That is literally true with regard to Irish feeling at the present moment, but is it Irish feeling only? The Irish criminal properly so-

called, would be received in England just as if he were an ordinary English criminal, but if people knew that he had been sentenced by one of those notorious Irish Resident Magistrates under the Crimes Act, there is hardly a town or a public meeting in England, Scotland or Wales, in which he would not be hailed with acclamation. That is the state of things which the right honourable gentleman and the Government have brought about." Late in the same evening Mr. Parnell rose to speak, and was received with a remarkable outburst of enthusiasm. The whole of the Liberal party, including Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Morley, Sir William Harcourt, and the other occupants of the front Opposition Bench, with the sole exception of Lord Hartington, rose to cheer him, and it was several minutes before he could begin his speech. Lord Hartington and a few of his supporters behind him remained seated. The Tories looked on in disheartened silence; they had not even an expression of congratulation for the Irish leader, after his triumphant escape from the net which their malevolence and suspicion, assisted by forgery, had, as the Scripture says, "privily set for him." Mr. Parnell referred to the exposures in the Commission Court. "I shall not stop," he said, "to remind the House of one of the means by which the Coercionists obtained urgency for their Coercion Act, nor of the conspiracy which assisted them, on the very night of the second reading, to steal away the liberties of Ireland. They will have to stand or fall by this law as it stands, and it is useless for them now to whine, as some of them are doing, and to say that they would like to see some distinction made between the treatment of political prisoners and others. It is owing to them and to their action that this distinction was not made two years ago." After a reply from Mr. Matthews, the House divided, and Mr. Morley's amendment was rejected by three hundred and thirty-nine against two hundred and sixty, a majority of seventy-nine, sixty-two of whom were Dissident Liberals.



The further debates on the Address led to several divisions. Professor Stuart invited the Government at once to consolidate and amend the Sanitary Acts, but Mr. Ritchie replied that the existing law was sufficient; he thought, moreover, that the County Councils might deal with the subject. There was a discussion on the Distress in the Highlands of Scotland, in which Mr. Chamberlain said he thought the Government might assist in the provision of fishing harbours. He proposed also State-aided emigration. Mr. W. H. Smith said the Government would consider any scheme of emigration which did not involve confiscation. Mr. Pickersgill introduced a discussion on the suppression of the right of public meeting in Trafalgar Square. He was supported by Mr. James Rowlands, who said, "The people of London are determined not to be deprived of their right by the edict of a mere Police Commissioner." Mr. George Howell denied that any of his meetings had led to disturbances; the residents had come out on their balconies and expressed approval of the conduct of the meetings, though they did not agree with the sentiments expressed. Mr. Picton urged the Government to make some settlement of the matter, in the interests of the peace of London. Professor Stuart said that certain parts of Trafalgar Square were marked off for public meetings. Mr. Causton strongly supported the appeal to which Sir Charles Russell had given the support of his great legal knowledge and authority. The amendment was defeated by 188 to 109. On the sixth of March Mr. Smith applied the closure and the Address was carried.

The National Defence Scheme indicated in the Queen's Speech was brought forward by Lord George Hamilton, on the seventh of March. It was proposed to construct and equip seventy new vessels for the Navy, at a cost of £21,500,000; of this large sum ten millions was to be issued out of the Consolidated Fund, during the seven years ending with the 31st of March, 1896, and £11,500,000 to be provided for in the naval estimates of the

five years ending with the 31st of March, 1894. The scheme was vigorously attacked by Lord Randolph Churchill, who complained that to bind the House as to its future course was improper and would be ineffectual. Mr. Goschen admitted that it was a departure from the Constitutional system of annual votes, but said the object of the Government was, to prevent any alteration being made in their scheme during the four years over which it was to extend, a complete admission that they wished to antedate the votes and curtail the authority of the succeeding Parliament. His plan was to increase the Navy estimates by £600,000 a year for the next four years ; this would go towards the £11,500,000 to be spent in the dockyards. A special fund of ten millions would be paid out of the Consolidated Fund for the next seven years, at the rate of £1,430,000 a year. The chief objection of the Liberal party to this scheme found expression in an amendment by Mr. Childers, declaring that the cost of making these additions to the Navy should be met by annual votes in Committee of Supply. He contended that since the Reform Act of 1832 no such proposal as that of the Government had been presented to Parliament. The needs of the year should be met by the money grants of the year, and it was especially objectionable, as Mr. Gladstone also pointed out, that the present Parliament should not only tie its own hands in this matter, but should tie the hands also of the very different House of Commons which would succeed to it. Mr. Childers's amendment was rejected by 158 to 125 ; a majority of only 33. The Naval Defence Bill by which these arrangements were given the force of law was carried by 277 to 136. There was a division on the third reading, when 183 supported it and 101 voted against it. It ran quickly through the House of Lords and received the Royal Assent on the 31st May.

In the meantime several discussions on Irish questions had taken place. Mr. John O'Connor brought in a Bill requiring that political prisoners in Ireland, imprisoned

under the Crimes Act, should be treated as first class misdemeanants. The Bill was defeated by 259 to 193, but the discussion upon it had good and lasting results. Sir William Harcourt seconded the motion in a vigorous speech. He pointed out that the responsibility for the harsh treatment of political prisoners lay with the Chief Secretary. Mr. Sullivan, when Lord Mayor of Dublin, had been imprisoned as a first class misdemeanant, whereas Mr. E. Harrington for the same offence of publishing reports of illegal meetings, had been imprisoned with hard labour. Yet Mr. Balfour talked of the equality of law in Ireland. The law depended on the men before whom a case came. Immediately after Mr. Sullivan's moderate sentence, the Chief Secretary made several speeches, and they were understood. "These Removable Magistrates," said Sir W. Harcourt, "are very much like collie dogs in Scotland. They do not want a word. They know very well by the eye of the master what particular sheep is to be brought up." Mr. Balfour made a remarkable speech. He defended the prison officials, and said he thought it was poor statesmanship to make irrational and unjustifiable alterations in the fundamental laws and procedure of the country, in obedience to any mere passing phase of public opinion, which was the result of agitation such as they had witnessed in the last few months. Still it was also poor statesmanship not to try and find out what there was of a rational and logical nature, at the bottom of the feeling which might have been excited in the country. Prison treatment had not engaged much of his attention, but he confessed he had never been able to understand on what principle such things as prison clothes, the cutting of the hair, and matters of that kind had been enforced upon every kind of prisoner. He thought these kinds of punishment which do not inflict discomfort, but which were thought by some people to inflict degradation, need not form part of prison discipline. The evil of that kind of punishment was, he said, that the hardened criminal was not punished by it at all; therefore



it seemed to him to be wholly irrational to carry out this iron system of rigid uniformity in regard to prison dress. All this was just what the Liberal party had been saying for a couple of years, and what during those years Mr. Balfour had laughed at them for saying. That he should now get up and say it himself, was a Liberal victory as great as any that had been won at the polls. Mr. Balfour had been frightened. His own friends had begun to say that he was wrecking the Government, and Mr. Balfour flinched. "Government that does not flinch" was thus over in just a couple of years. He promised a modification of the prison rules, but in a parting fling and amid mocking laughter, said it was not gentlemen below the gangway but anti-vaccinationists and Salvationists who would profit by the change. Mr. John Morley, in a speech of ten minutes, said the National Protest had already done some good. A week ago Mr. Balfour had said that Mr. O'Brien's objection to the prison clothes was a monomania, now he said they ought to be objected to, and he was going to alter the whole system of prison discipline to get himself out of a scrape. His letter to Lord Aberdare as Chairman of the Royal Commission, however, left the question of the treatment of political prisoners untouched, and Mr. Shaw Lefevre pointed out, in a letter to *The Daily News*, that "to save his reputation for firmness and consistency, the Chief Secretary has applied his new rules to all prisoners at the discretion of the prison authorities."

The Falcarragh evictions on the Olphert Estate in Donegal attracted much attention. A Manchester deputation which went to look on, found themselves shadowed by police. They had a photographer with them to take pictures of the scenes of the evictions, but he was not allowed to photograph a battering ram which was being used for beating down the people's homes. The battering ram, however, was reproduced, and shown with great effect in many English towns. On Easter Monday Mr. Conybeare, M.P., with Mr. Harrison and Mr. Benson, two Oxford under-

graduates who had been distributing provisions to the poor tenants, were arrested on a charge of conspiracy. Mr. Benson was quickly discharged, but Mr. Conybeare and Mr. Harrison were brought up before two Resident Magistrates, when it was urged for the Crown that in supplying besieged tenants with food they were conspiring to defeat the law, and that Mr. Conybeare, in cheering the Plan of Campaign, was promoting an illegal conspiracy. On these charges Mr. Conybeare was found guilty and sentenced to three months imprisonment; Mr. Harrison was acquitted. Mr. Conybeare appealed, but the iniquitous sentence was confirmed and he went to prison.

From the beginning of the Session, Ministers had been frequently cross-examined as to their complicity with *The Times* in the charges against the Irish members. On the 18th of March Mr. John Morley asked at what date Mr. Horne and Mr. Joyce, two Resident Magistrates, began to examine papers and tabulate statistics, to be used in the inquiry before the Special Commission. Mr. Balfour had to confess that these Resident Magistrates undertook the duty by order of the Government, and that the result of their labour reached Mr. Soames, the solicitor for *The Times*, through the Government. On the 20th of March Mr. Healy asked the Home Secretary with respect to the permission given to Richard Pigott to visit the convict John Daly in Chatham prison. Mr. Matthews admitted that the interview had been allowed, and that Mr. Soames had also seen both John Daly and the dynamiter, Dr. Gallagher. Sir William Harcourt asked what representations were made to the directors of the prison which induced them to allow Pigott to see Daly. He was not asking what Pigott went to the prison for, everybody knew that he went for the purpose of getting Daly to swear away the character of the member for Cork. They wanted to know, not why he was sent, but who sent him on such a errand. "The infamous perjurer and forger Pigott went to see an assassin in order to make evidence against the member for Cork." Similar

discussions were kept up night after night, with the result of clearly proving, by the admissions of the Ministers themselves, the active sympathy of the Government with, if not its actual complicity in, the proceedings of *The Times*. On the 21st of March there was a discussion on the salary of the Chief Secretary, when Mr. John Morley pointed out the evidence, which was daily accumulating, that the Government had "fought a furtive, clandestine, sinister battle against their political opponents, behind the backs of private persons who were on their trial for a false and malicious libel." Mr. Balfour, in an angry reply, said that the Opposition "had not scrupled in the first place to assert that Houston was the accomplice of Pigott, in the second place, that *The Times* was the accomplice of Houston, and in the third place, that the Government were the accomplices of *The Times*." Each of these assertions was received with great cheering by the Opposition. Mr. Balfour continued, "A more shocking, a more scandalous and a more unfounded libel had never been uttered by people who were engaged at that very moment in protesting that no crime was so shocking as that of libelling one's political opponents. "Why, you revel in libel," said Mr. Balfour; "libel is your daily bread." In the same sitting Mr. MacNeill asked about a Resident Magistrate named Segrave; and Baron de Worms, in answer to Mr. John Ellis, said that on the previous day he had received a telegram from the Cape Government informing him that in July 1885 Lieutenant Segrave had been dismissed from the Cape Infantry for gross neglect and breach of trust. Mr. Balfour said he had at once suspended him.

The by-elections of this part of the year showed the effect of all these revelations on the constituencies. On the 19th of February there was polling in East Perthshire, the constituency in which Mr. Carew had been arrested. Sir John Kinloch was the Liberal candidate, and Mr. Boase the Conservative. At the ballot on the 19th of February Sir John Kinloch was returned by 4,005 votes to



2,289, a Liberal majority of 1,716, which was an increase of 407 on the Liberal majority in 1886. At Burnley, where Mr. Slagg's resignation made a vacancy, Mr. J. S. Balfour was returned without a contest on the 27th February. In the Barnsley division of Yorkshire there was an election on the 13th of March, consequent on the retirement of Mr. Courtney Kenny. Lord Compton was the Liberal candidate, and was returned by 6,232 to 3,781 given to Mr. Bruce-Wentworth, a Conservative. This Liberal majority of 2,451 was 57 smaller than the majority in 1886. On the 16th of March there was an election in the Kennington division of Lambeth. Mr. Beresford Hope was the Tory candidate, and Mr. Mark Beaufoy was the Liberal candidate. In this constituency there was a Conservative majority in 1884 of 360, and in 1886 of 430. The Conservative poll was now rather less than in 1885 and rather more than in 1886. Mr. Beaufoy, however, made so large an increase in the Liberal numbers as to gain the seat by a majority of 630. On the 25th of March there was an election in the Gorton division of Lancashire; the candidates were Mr. E. F. Hatch and Mr. W. Mather; the Liberal majority, which had been 1,748 in 1885, and had sunk to 457 in 1886, was now increased by Mr. Mather to 846. In the Enfield division of Middlesex, on the 1st of April, Captain Bowles, a Conservative, was returned by a majority of 1,512 over Mr. Fairbairns, the Liberal candidate, a decrease in the Tory majority as compared with 1886 of 688. The death of Mr. John Bright, which occurred on the 27th of March, left a vacancy in the central division of Birmingham, and his son Mr. John Albert Bright came forward for the vacancy. The seat had been contested in 1885 by Lord Randolph Churchill, who in spite of Mr. John Bright's long and distinguished services, had polled 4,216 votes against 4,989 given to Mr. Bright. As Mr. Bright's poll represented the Liberals in the constituency, the Conservatives contended that the seat should now fall to them. They maintained that whether

the candidate were a Conservative or a Dissident Liberal, the vast majority of the votes by which he would be returned would necessarily be those of Conservative electors. The quarrel became so warm that the Liberals thought it possible to win the seat ; and brought forward Mr. Phipson Beale, but in face of a Liberal candidate the Ministerialists healed their differences, so that Mr. Albert Bright was returned by 5,621 votes to 2,561. On the 16th of April there was a poll at Rochester, where Colonel Hughes-Hallett had been returned by a Conservative majority of 241 in 1885, and 249 in 1886. The candidates were now Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen on the Liberal side, and Mr. H. D. Davis, Conservative ; the Liberals polled 1,655, and the Conservatives 1,580, a Liberal majority of 75.

Mr. Goschen introduced the Budget on the 15th of April. He had received during the bygone year £88,472,812. The expenditure had been £85,673,872, so that the margin which he had estimated at £212,056, amounted in reality to £2,798,930 ; of this sum £2,009,978 had been expended in the Conversion of the national debt, so that the actual excess of revenue over expenditure was £788,982. His estimate of the current year was for an expenditure of £86,966,827, while the revenue to be anticipated, if no change were made in taxation, was £85,050,000. Here, then, was an anticipated deficit of £1,916,827. He proposed to provide for this deficit by keeping back a million of the money saved by the Conversion of the debt, which had been intended to go in the reduction of debt, thus reducing the expenditure to £85,966,827 ; a new death duty of 1 per cent. on estates of £10,000 or upwards he reckoned would yield £800,000 ; a slight change in the duty on beer, amounting he said to the addition of one-fourteenth of a penny, to the twopence levied on every gallon of beer would produce £350,000. Here, therefore, was an anticipated revenue of £86,150,000, against an expenditure of £85,966,827, leaving an estimated surplus of £183,000.

When the Budget Bill came on for discussion, Mr. Gladstone moved a resolution which, without any increase of taxation, would provide for the treatment of landed estate on the same principles as personal estate ; this was rejected by 259 votes against 183.

Among the minor bills and motions of the year were Mr. Stevenson's Sunday Closing Bill, which was carried on the 27th of March by 179 votes against 157. A bill for legalizing marriage with a deceased wife's sister in Scotland, was read a second time on the 3rd of April by 184 votes to 131, but was not carried any further during the Session. A similar measure for England was introduced in the House of Lords by the Duke of St. Albans on the 9th of May. It was supported by Lord Grimthorpe and by Lord Herschell. Lord Selborne, the Duke of Argyll and the Archbishop of Canterbury opposed it, and it was rejected by 147 to 120, the Prince of Wales voting for the bill. Mr. Broadhurst, on the 2nd of April, moved a resolution declaring that "the chronic poverty of great numbers of the people living in the larger cities and towns of Great Britain is a danger to the well-being of the State, and calls for the instant attention of the Government to remedial measures by which the depopulation of the agricultural districts may be checked, and the congestion of the great centres of population relieved." Mr. R. T. Reid seconded the motion, and two Tory members, Mr. Seton-Karr and Mr. S. Gedge proposed the Tory remedy of State colonization. Mr. Walter Long and Mr. Ritchie expressed sympathy with the object of the motion, but promised a Select Committee. The debate was adjourned, and was not resumed. On the 5th of April Mr. Picton moved for a Royal Commission to inquire into the Vaccination Acts, and to report what change in the law was desirable. The motion was accepted by the Government and the Commission appointed. On the 30th of April Mr. Samuel Smith moved a resolution, which Mr. Caine seconded, declaring that the fiscal system of the Indian Government



produces increased consumption of intoxicating drink, and spreads misery and ruin among the industrial classes, and carried it against the Government by 113 to 103. A few days later Mr. Samuel Smith proposed a resolution urging the Government to stop the Opium Trade between India and China, but was defeated by 165 to 88. Mr. Mundella contrived to carry a very useful Bill for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Much discussion arose over an amendment proposed by the Government, allowing children engaged on premises licensed for public entertainments to be exempted from the provision forbidding the employment of children under ten years of age. This proposal was twice defeated in the Commons, but the Lords inserted a clause giving magistrates in Petty Sessions power to license such children for employment if they were over seven years of age, and this change was accepted and a Bill passed. With this exception, Mr. Mundella's Bill is a kind of new magna charta of childhood. Mr. H. W. Lawson's Leaseholds Enfranchisement Bill was defeated on the first of May by 186 to 157, though Mr. Gladstone voted for it.

Another important Bill, carried by a private member, was that of Mr. Stuart Rendel, for improving Intermediate Education in Wales. This useful Act creates a Board of Education for Wales and Monmouthshire; with power to establish Intermediate and Technical Schools. Mr. Rendel proposed that the Board of Education should be elected by the County Councils; but to this the Government would not consent, and they substituted for it an Educational Committee of five members for each county, three of the members being appointed by the County Council and two by the Education Department. The Technical Instruction Act was a Government measure. It empowers local authorities to make a rate, not exceeding a penny in the pound, to be applied for the establishment of Technical Schools. The Bill was introduced very late in the Session, but it created a good deal of discussion. The Tory dislike of School Boards enabled the Government to resist and defeat

an amendment moved by Mr. Channing, making the School Board, where there is one, the authority for carrying it out. Mr. Edward Robertson proposed to give the control of the Technical Instruction to the Education Department instead of to the Science and Art Department, but this was defeated. Another Government measure was the Universities (Scotland) Act, which substitutes a charge of £42,000 a year on the Consolidated Fund for the much smaller yearly grants, and in other respects carries out the Report of the Royal Commission of 1876. This measure caused an interesting discussion. The Government proposed to drop theological tests for all but theological chairs, and the question of doctrinal teaching was left to the University Commissioners, who were to report on it to Parliament. Mr. Bryce moved to abolish all tests, thus making the theological teaching in the Scotch Universities as free as it is in the German Universities and in Manchester New College, Oxford, but the amendment was rejected.

Mr. E. Robertson moved a resolution on the 10th of May against the representation of the Universities in Parliament; this was seconded by Dr. Farquharson, who said the University constituencies were either Tory pocket boroughs or refuges for the destitute. Sir George Trevelyan said that the University members unanimously opposed all measures of reform. Sir John Lubbock, the Solicitor General for Scotland, Mr. Raikes, and Mr. Plunket, all University members, spoke against the motion, which was rejected by 217 to 126. On the 14th of May Mr. Dillwyn moved a resolution for the disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales; it was seconded by Mr. Osborne Morgan, and supported by Mr. Stansfeld, but was negatived by 284 to 231. Mr. Bradlaugh moved and Mr. Hanbury seconded a resolution declaring that 27 years' purchase is too high a rate to pay for the commutation of Perpetual Pensions, which was the rate fixed by a Treasury Minute. The motion was supported by Mr. Gladstone, but was rejected by 264 to 205. Mr. Labouchere's motion for

the abolition of hereditary legislators was seconded by Mr. Wallace and supported by Mr. Bryce. Mr. Balfour, who opposed it, said the House of Lords had more solid popularity than any second chamber in the world, except, perhaps, the Senate of the United States. The resolution was defeated by 201 to 160. The Bill for the abolition of the London Coal Dues led to some discussion. Mr. Matthews proposed that a Committee should be appointed to inquire as to the relation of that tax to the finances of the City Corporation. Mr. Courtney suggested that it should be read a second time and sent to a hybrid committee, to which Mr. Smith consented ; but Mr. Burdett-Coutts insisted on a division, when the Bill was read a second time by 264 to 104. It went to a Select Committee, in which the duty of fourpence a ton was continued for one year, to be applied by the City Corporation in payment for the Holborn Viaduct. This amendment was opposed by Mr. Pickersgill but was carried by 138 to 82.

There were two important discussions on the 28th of May in Committee of Supply. Mr. Edward Robertson called attention to the fact that Lord Lytton had come away from Paris at the opening of the Exhibition which was intended to commemorate the centenary of the French Revolution. Mr. Robertson said truly that the hearty sympathy of the whole English people was with France, and that the Government had taken the lead of the other monarchies of Europe in an attempt to boycott the French Revolution. It was an act of subserviency to Prince Bismarck. Sir James Fergusson made a stumbling reply, first saying that Lord Lytton had got leave of absence that he might undergo medical treatment, and then that for our Ambassador to have taken part in a celebration in which other countries were not united, would be equivalent to foreign countries taking part in a celebration against the union of England and Ireland. Mr. Gladstone said that a serious error of judgment had been committed, and Mr. John Morley, who said that all the carnage which took



place in the French Revolution after 1791 was entirely due to the despots of the Coalition, deplored that the opportunity had been lost of showing the French people that this country wished well to their institutions. The motion to reduce the Foreign Secretary's salary by £100—a formal motion made in order to raise the question—was defeated by 283 to 190. Mr. Bryce then called attention to the cruelties which were being perpetrated in Armenia, and asked that some effective remonstrance might be addressed to the Turkish Government in the matter. Sir James Fergusson gave a half-consent, and Mr. Gladstone thought that more energetic warning should be sent to the Sultan. Mr. W. H. Smith closed the discussion.

The chief Government measure of the year was the Scottish Local Government Bill, which came on for second reading on the 23rd of May. This Bill was, in some respects, an advance on last year's English Act. The Government had come to a turning point in their history. They now recognized that Mr. Balfour's Irish policy of cruel coercion was ruining them, and they instinctively turned to Liberal legislation to rehabilitate them in popular esteem. The complete collapse of the Campaign of Calumny, on which they had depended, left them, like Wolsey, naked to their enemies. To snatch a few comely garments from the Liberal wardrobe, and to come before the country as Liberal legislators was the only policy. "Motley's the only wear," and motley in which the Liberal colour showed largely was the legislative garb they henceforth began to put on. So in this Scottish Local Government Bill they astonished all the world by including a proposal for Free Education. Lord Salisbury had, indeed, talked of "assisted education," but Tory expositors had carefully explained that "assisted" was quite different from "free." In this Bill it took either form according to the eye that looked at it. The scheme was to apply a portion of the Probate Duty, through the Scottish Education Department, to the payment of the fees in the elementary schools. The result of the

arrangement was described by Mr. Balfour to be, that up to the Third Standard education in Scottish elementary schools would henceforth be free. This scheme was hateful to the old Conservatives, who looked upon it as leading inevitably to Free Education in England. Mr. Howorth, the Tory member for the southern division of Salford, moved to omit the clause. It was in vain that Mr. Balfour contended that this grant for Scotch education in no sense committed the Government to Free Education either in Scotland or in England. Sir Richard Temple said he had pledged himself against Free Education, and though he was a party man, his pledge to his constituents was higher than his duty to his party, and he called on those around him to assist him in stemming the rising flood. The amendment was defeated, and Free Education in Scotland was sanctioned by 245 votes against 52. The 52 who helped to stem the rising flood were all Tories. An amendment similar to that moved by Mr. Arthur Acland in the discussion on the English Local Government Bill was moved by Mr. Graham, providing for the payment of travelling expenses of County Councillors in Scotland, but was rejected by 190 to 107. A new clause, proposed by the Lord Advocate, providing that no woman should be eligible for election as a County Councillor, was accepted. An amendment by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, proposing to give married women the same municipal franchise which is possessed by unmarried women ratepayers, was rejected by 111 to 56; and another amendment by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman for giving the County Councils the control of the police, was rejected by 205 to 113.

It was one of the unsuccessful Bills of the Government that created the liveliest discussion out of doors. I have already described the absurd Convention for the suppression of Export Bounties on Sugar, which was signed by Lord Salisbury and Baron de Worms on the 30th of August, 1888. The Convention required an Act of Parliament to give it effect, and a Bill for this purpose was

brought in by Baron de Worms on the 11th of April. It gave power to Her Majesty in Council to prohibit the importation of what was absurdly called "bounty-fed," but which was in reality bounty-cheapened sugar. The United Kingdom is one of the very few countries in the world which does not produce sugar. We have to import all we eat and all we use in manufactures, and our purchases are so large that other countries compete for our custom. Sir Thomas Farrer, whose able and persistent opposition roused the nation to the meaning of what Baron de Worms was doing, explains how the Sugar Bounties originated. Most nations tax their sugar; we did so till 1874. When the sugar is exported the tax is given back, so that the product may not be handicapped in foreign markets. The drawback, however, is so reckoned that the grower gets back more than he paid in the tax. He can, therefore, sell his sugar to go abroad, cheaper than he can sell it for consumption at home. This is very bad for the taxpayers of his own country, who pay to enable their sugar-growers to sell sugar to foreign buyers under cost price. It is no wonder, therefore, that the foreign countries whose sugar is thus "bounty-cheapened" for their customers, want to stop a system which for them is wasteful and costly. But they cannot agree among themselves, and so they all go on paying bounties to cheapen sugar for us, their chief customer. There was, however, another way out of their difficulty. If England could be got to say that she would not have this "bounty-fed sugar," then the countries which ceased to give the bounty would not only save themselves the foolish outlay, but would also get a monopoly of our market. This monopoly the Sugar Convention would have given them. The "High Contracting Parties" bound themselves to exclude from their territories "all raw sugar, refined sugar, molasses, or glucose coming from any countries, provinces beyond the seas, colonies, or foreign possessions maintaining the system of open or disguised bounties on the manufacture or exportation of sugar." A



Permanent International Commission was to decide to what countries this embargo applied. Had the Government Sugar Convention Bill passed, a Commission representing Great Britain, Germany, Holland, Russia, Spain and Italy, would have sat in London to decide what sugar was bounty-fed and to what extent. When they had come to a decision, all the sugar from all the countries they decided against would have been kept out of our markets. As a consequence, the other countries—they were only Germany, Holland, and Russia—would have had a monopoly. Baron de Worms went about saying that the price would not be raised, and even Mr. Goschen and Lord Knutsford acquiesced in the statement. The common sense of the public, however, saw through the fallacy. To them, this scheme was Protection in disguise, and the Government, therefore, dropped it for the Session. The Convention did not come into operation till the 1st of September, 1891, so that there was plenty of time for the Bill, and for Baron de Worms to persuade the people to accept it if he could.

The Government were more successful where they better deserved success. They got through a Lunacy Bill which had been before Parliament in 1883, 1886, 1887, and 1888; and which was a legacy from the times of Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry. Other important measures were, the Weights and Measures Act, an Act amending the Friendly Societies Acts, and another extending to London the principle which had been found to work well in many large towns, of requiring cases of Infectious Disease to be notified to the local authorities. The Regulation of Railways Act; the Act providing for the establishment of a Department of Agriculture, an Irish Light Railways Act, and one of the Irish Drainage Acts, were also among the Government successes of the Session. Of its legislative failures, besides those already mentioned, were the District Councils Bill, which was never introduced, the Land Transfer Bill, which was defeated in the Lords, and three out of the four Irish Drainage Bills. The Tithes Bill was lost again by the

hesitation of the Government. They had not ventured to propose that the owner of the land should be made entirely responsible for the tithe, and on the twelfth of August an amendment to this effect was only defeated by four votes. The Government then determined to adopt the principle of the amendment, but the Speaker decided that such a change would require a new Bill; the matter was therefore left over for another year. Among the successes of private members was the resolution proposed early in the Session by Mr. Sydney Buxton, and accepted by the Government, for a Conference on the Slave Trade. One of its preposterous failures was the hint thrown out by Mr. Balfour to the Irish members of the probable establishment of a Roman Catholic University in Ireland. It involved a half-promise, and it never grew to more.

One of the liveliest discussions of the year arose on the question of Royal grants. On the second of July Mr. W. H. Smith read two messages from the Queen, one of which asked the House to enable her to make provision for Prince Albert Victor, the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, and the other told the House of the intended marriage of the Princess Louise of Wales to the Earl of Fife, and asked her "Faithful Commons" to make suitable provision for the bride. A Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the whole question of Royal grants. This Committee made an elaborate report, tracing the history of these grants, pointing out what the precedents were, and showing that the annuities now payable to members of the Royal family amounted to £152,000 a year, whereas in the first year of Her Majesty's reign they were £277,000. The Government proposed to give Prince Albert Victor an annuity of £10,000 a year, to be raised on his marriage to £25,000, and to give any other sons £8,000 a year, to be increased at marriage to £15,000. They proposed further that every daughter of the Prince of Wales should have £3,000 annuity, and a capital sum of £10,000 on her marriage. Mr. Gladstone suggested that an increase of £36,000

a year should be made in the income of the Prince of Wales, to be applied for the benefit of his children. Mr. Labouchere moved that no special provision should be made for the Queen's grandchildren. This was defeated by 398 to 116. Mr. John Morley moved an amendment, declaring that the arrangement thus proposed left room for further claims, and that some final arrangement ought to be made. This was negatived by 355 to 134. The Nationalist members voted with the majority in both these divisions.

The Session closed on the 30th of August. The Queen's Speech spoke of the "unbroken European peace," and said that at the instance of England a Conference would assemble at Brussels in the autumn, "which will consider the present condition of the Slave Trade both by land and sea, and will deliberate on the measures for arresting or mitigating the evils which it still inflicts upon mankind." The Speech further mentioned the agreement with France as to boundaries on the West Coast of Africa, the postal and telegraphic Convention with France and Germany, and the acceptance of "loyal offers of several of the natives princes and chiefs, who had come forward to share the military burdens imposed upon my subjects in British India." After expressing regret at the failure of the Western Australia Bill, and mentioning the chief Acts of the Session, the Speech concluded with a thankful recognition "that the signs of growing prosperity, the fruit of returning confidence, are everywhere discernible."

One of the chief political events of the year, outside the House of Commons, was "the wakening of the West." On the fifth of June, the Wednesday before Whitsuntide, Mr. Gladstone set out on a political visit to the South and West of England. He went first to Southampton, where, after driving through streets filled with cheering crowds to the Deanery, he made a speech in which he congratulated Southampton on the triumphant return of Mr. Evans a year before, and showed from the figures of the by-elections the



bright prospect there was of a great Liberal majority in the next Parliament. He then went to Malwood on a visit to Sir William and Lady Harcourt, and on the next day to Romney, where the Mayor and Corporation presented him with an address. The Vicar declined the invitation of the Mayor to meet him, and would not allow the church bells to be rung; and the twice-defeated Mr. Evelyn Ashley also declined, though Mr. Gladstone was on his way to lunch with him amid the Palmerstonian memories and associations of Broadlands. On Saturday Mr. Gladstone went to Weymouth, with welcomes all the way, and on to Portland, where he embarked on Mrs. Eliot Yorke's yacht, "The Garland." At Weymouth Lord Wolverton presented him with addresses from the Liberal Associations of the neighbourhood, and Mr. Gladstone made a speech. Arriving in Dartmouth Harbour at ten o'clock at night, there were crowds waiting on the quay, and a boatman said he had never seen more people on shore even at a regatta. On Monday Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone had a great popular reception at Torquay, where he made a speech in the Public Hall. On Tuesday they went on to Falmouth, where the Mayor and Corporation went on board the yacht to present an address, and the party then landed and drove to the Moor, where Mr. Gladstone received addresses from Liberal Associations and made a speech to a great meeting. On Wednesday the party, which included Mr. Arnold Morley and Mr. Cyril Flower, sailed up the river to Truro, where Mr. Gladstone spoke to a great audience in the Public Rooms. From Truro they went on to St. Austell, where Mr. Gladstone made a long and important speech. He had promised to refer to disestablishment. So far as England was concerned he said, "I do not think that even the most sanguine amongst you would presume to say, that there has been in England a distinct pronouncement of the national voice upon the subject of disestablishment. You see, or you believe you see, a movement of opinion in that direction, and I believe you are wisely content to await those

results which are achieved in this country when the due season has arrived, by movements of that kind peaceably conducted, and appealing neither to violence nor prejudice, but to the slow process of conviction. Naturally, at my time of life, I regard such a subject as placed beyond the possibility, the reasonable possibility, of contact with myself. I will only say, in respect to it, that I believe if it ever comes it will come to a prepared people; it will come, I trust, without the bitterness which, unfortunately, has too much marked our recent conflicts on the subject of Irish privileges; it will come, I think, to a great religious community which will have learned before that time to disavow all slavish dependence upon the temporal and secular arm, which will know that the Establishment is one thing and the Church is another thing, and which will have ample means undoubtedly, if the spirit be not wanting, to provide for and to fill up whatever void might be caused by the withdrawal of the support from national property, which the Church may be now considered to receive." Passing on then to Wales and Scotland, Mr. Gladstone quoted Lord Hartington's declaration, when he was the leader of the Liberal party, that the question of disestablishment in Scotland would have to be settled according to the opinion of the people of Scotland. So it should be with Wales. After making this speech Mr. Gladstone went on to Bodmin, where he spoke in the Market Hall. Then the party drove to Llanhydrock, to spend the night under Lord Robartes's roof. A drive through a great demonstration at Wadebridge to Tintagel, to spend the night at Sir Arthur Hayter's seaside dwelling in that delightfully situated village, where more addresses were presented and another speech was made; then back the next day to Launceston, with another speech to a crowd in the Castle Green, after a welcome by Sir Thomas Acland, finished the Cornish part of this remarkable tour. Thence by the rail through Tavistock, where a crowd at the station got a brief speech, to Plymouth. Plymouth gave him a magnificent reception, and in the

evening he spoke at a great assembly in the Drill Hall, after which there was a display of fireworks on the Hoe, with an emblematical design of the reconciliation of England and Ireland by Mr. Henry Holiday. From Plymouth the party went back in the yacht to Poole, where there was another popular reception and another speech ; then addresses presented by Liberal Associations at Wimborne Minster and at Blandford, on the way to Lord Wolverton's house at Iwerne to spend Sunday. On Monday morning Mr. Gladstone drove to Shaftesbury, where he made a short speech, another speech—this time on the rural population and the agricultural problem—at Gillingham ; a wayside word in Salisbury Railway station, and then home to London, to be present and speak on the progress of public business in the House of Commons in the evening. And Mr. Gladstone at that time was half way through his eightieth year. Another striking popular demonstration took place in the beginning of September, when Mr. Stansfeld and Lady Sandhurst received the freedom of the City of Dublin. Sir William Harcourt, speaking at Carnarvon on the 18th of October, said he expressed the clear conviction of the Liberal party when he said that the Established Church in Wales must cease to exist. He said, too, that as Free Education had been given to Scotland, it must be extended to England and Wales.

The chief event of the summer and early autumn was the strike of 2,500 labourers at the East and West India Docks. These men were not skilled workmen. They usually got employment by gathering round the Dock gates, where, day by day, the officials engaged as many of them as they wanted. Their pay was from fourpence to fivepence an hour, and regular hands got from 3s. 8d. to 5s. a day ; of a vast number, however, the whole earnings did not average more than seven shillings a week. Evidence as to their condition had been taken before the Sweating Committee of the House of Lords, and much public interest had been aroused in their desire for more regular work. The men



asked for a uniform pay of sixpence an hour, and that no engagement should be for less than four hours. The Strike rapidly extended to all the docks. The Lightermen, the Stevedores or men who pack the cargoes into the holds of vessels, the Corn and Timber Porters, and the permanent hands, all joined the movement. It was estimated that at one time 100,000 men were on strike. The sympathy of the public was entirely with them ; and subscriptions poured in from all parts of the country. No less than £48,736 was subscribed to the Strike Fund, of which £30,424 was sent by the Labour Associations of the Australasian Colonies. The demands of the men increased with the sympathy their movement evoked. In their final shape they were—First, that outsiders when taken on should have not less than four hours work and pay ; second, that men should only be engaged at eight o'clock and twelve o'clock each day ; third, that piece-work should be entirely abandoned ; fourth, that the pay should be sixpence an hour for day-work and eightpence an hour for overtime ; fifth, that the pay under the Contract system should be eightpence an hour, with a shilling an hour overtime. For a time this Strike occupied public attention to the exclusion of everything else. Sir James Whitehead, then Lord Mayor, formed at the Mansion House a Committee of Conciliation, associating with himself the Bishop of London, Mr. Sydney Buxton, M.P., Sir John Lubbock, M.P., and Cardinal Manning. The negotiations went on with various fortunes till the middle of September, when an agreement was come to which practically conceded the men's demands. The significance of the agitation was, however, in the new feeling of sympathy shown by all sections of the public, with the desire of the labouring classes for some amelioration of their lot. Since that time all labour questions have increased in importance and urgency. Heretofore, the great Trade Unions had been chiefly those of skilled workmen, now unskilled labour had shown its power to organize itself, and all "the dim common populations"

of the civilized world came as it were to clear self-consciousness and began to feel their strength. The Dockers of London led the way to the emancipation of unskilled labour all round the world. At the Trades Union Congress which was held at Dundee in the first week in September, a motion in favour of an eight hours day, to be enacted by Parliament for all kinds of labour, was defeated by eighty-eight votes to sixty-three, but a resolution was passed in favour of an eight hours day for people employed in mines.

There were eight contested by-elections in the second part of the year. In West Fifeshire the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. R. P. Bruce, who had been returned without a contest at the two previous elections, was filled by the return of Mr. Augustine Birrell, by 3,551 against 2,758 for Mr. Wemyss, his Conservative opponent; a Liberal majority of 793. In West Carmarthenshire, for a seat rendered vacant by the death of Mr. Powell, who had been returned in 1885 by a majority of 1,626, and in 1886 by a majority of 2,265—one of the very few instances in which the Liberal majority was greater in 1886 than it had been in 1885—Mr. J. L. Morgan was returned on the 17th July by 4,252 against 2,530 received by Mr. Williams-Drummond, his Conservative opponent. This Liberal majority of 1,722 was less by 543 than that of 1886, but larger by 96 than that of 1885. The resignation of Lord Charles Beresford caused a vacancy for East Marylebone. Mr. Leveson-Gower was the Liberal candidate and polled 2,086 votes; Mr. Boulnois, his Conservative opponent, receiving 2,579. This Conservative majority of 493 was less by 992 than that by which Lord Charles Beresford had defeated Professor Beesly in 1886. In September Mr. Chaplin accepted the post of Minister of Agriculture, which had been created by the Bill passed in the preceding Session; he had been returned in 1886 without opposition, but in 1885 had defeated Mr. Charles Sharpe by 1,301 votes. Mr. Otter, his Liberal opponent in this election, was

defeated by 1,308 votes, a Conservative gain of seven votes on their majority in 1885. In Dundee, on the 25th of September, Mr. Leng was returned unopposed for the seat rendered vacant by the death of Mr. Firth. On the 7th of October there was a great Liberal victory at Peterborough where the death of Mr. William Fitz-William had created a vacancy. Mr. Fitz-William, a Dissident Liberal, had been returned in 1885 by a majority over Mr. Sydney Buxton of 258, and in 1886 by a majority over Mr. Greenwood of 289. Mr. A. C. Morton, the Liberal candidate, was now returned by 1,893 votes to 1,642 given to his Dissident Liberal opponent, Mr. Purvis ; a Liberal majority of 251. There was a ballot on the next day in the combined counties of Elgin and Nairn, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. C. H. Anderson, a Liberal Dissident. Mr. Anderson had been returned in 1886 by a majority of 119. Mr. Seymour Keay, the Liberal candidate, was returned on the 9th of October by a majority of 509 over Mr. Logan, his Conservative opponent ; an increase of 410 in the Liberal majority. The accession of Mr. Hubbard to the Peerage caused a vacancy for the Northern division of Buckinghamshire, where the Liberal majority of 1,456 in 1885 had been turned by him into a Conservative majority of 71 in 1886. The Liberal candidate was now returned by a majority of 208 ; another Liberal gain. On the 25th of October there was an election at Brighton for the seat rendered vacant by the melancholy death of Sir Tindal Robertson. The candidates were Sir Robert Peel for the Liberals, and Mr. Gerald Loder for the Conservatives ; Mr. Loder was returned by a majority of 2,507. Up to the end of this year the Liberals had gained twelve seats and lost one to the Dissident Liberals. In the Municipal elections of the year their gains had been larger than on any previous occasion ; on the balance of the whole country, they had gained 18 seats in 1887, 35 seats in 1888, and now 84 seats in 1889.

All through the Autumn and right up to Christmas the



political controversy in the constituencies went on with undiminished activity. One incident of the controversy was a tour of Mr. Chamberlain's in the West of England. In a speech at Plymouth in the middle of October, he said he had never disputed the claim of the Irish people to a larger share in the management of their own affairs, and he still thought that a full, free and frank discussion of the question might lead to agreement, for all parties accepted the propositions laid down by Mr. Gladstone in 1885, that Ireland ought to have the largest possible extension of local government that could be given to it, with full security for the integrity of the Empire, the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, and the protection of minorities. At the Guildhall banquet on the 9th of November Lord Salisbury was unusually dull and prosaic. The shadow of the Dockers' victory was upon him, and he hinted that the late Lord Mayor and his friends had been "meddling with edged tools and risking interests of vast and tremendous magnitude." He said that the condition of Ireland was much improved, and that some part of the improvement was due not only to kindlier seasons but also to just and equitable government. He took a glance round the Empire, and said we had undertaken to sustain Egypt until she was competent to sustain and defend herself against every enemy, foreign or domestic. Surveying the continent of Europe he said, "the barometer has distinctly risen in the scale of peace." The National Union of Conservative Associations was held at Nottingham in the last week of November, where the delegates, some 700 in number, passed a resolution in favour of the formation of a National Party. Lord Salisbury was present and made half-a-dozen speeches. On the Education question he said: "I expressed the opinion four years ago at Newport, that by forcing the people to send their children to school, whether they ask it or not, you were incurring a certain obligation to relieve the burden of that compulsion, where the circumstances of the parent were such that it was too

heavy for him to bear. We believe that considerable progress in that direction may be made. We have already introduced measures to that effect in Scotland. I believe that with perfect consistency, with sound principle, and merely recognizing the fact, that where you enforce a duty upon a man you are bound to make it as easy for him as you can, I believe that it will be possible considerably to extend that principle in England, and very greatly to relieve the difficulties of the working man in that respect. But allow me to say that I consider the question as to its rapidity, and as to its progress, to be a question for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I venture to repeat, that the gift of free or assisted education must be so conducted, as not to diminish in the slightest degree the guarantee that we now possess for religious liberty, as expressed by the voluntary schools. If it is to suppress the denominational schools, free education would be not a blessing but a curse." In this way the leader of the Conservative party adopted Free Education as one of the objects of Conservative policy.

The annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation was held at Manchester on the third and fourth of December. In opening the first sitting of the Council, Sir James Kitson said that some very striking results had been obtained in the recent Municipal elections at Birmingham. In East Birmingham the Home Ruler, who last year was defeated by 20 votes, won this year by 285; the whole of the Eastern division had been fought and the result seemed to show that Mr. Matthews would be defeated. In the Bordesley ward, which contained two-thirds of the electors in Mr. Collings's division, the working man Home Ruler defeated the Liberal Unionist by 1,177; which was very much like a notice to quit to Mr. Jesse Collings. In Mr. Kenrick's division the Home Ruler carried the largest ward by 500 votes, and they now hoped that in the next election the Liberals would gain three seats in Birmingham. Sir William Harcourt, speaking at

the first meeting of the Council, said: "Lord Salisbury takes credit to his Government of to-day that it is not a Jingo Government, and that its policy is not a Jingo policy, that we have now no annexations, no Afghan wars or European complications. No, happily we have not, but why? It is on account of the great verdict given by the English people in the year 1880, which destroyed the Jingo Government of that day. The Tory party were obliged to learn the lesson of that election, and they have learned it. At the next election they will have to learn a lesson equally salutary and equally conclusive; they will be taught that as in 1880 the English nation repudiated 'Jingoism,' so at the next election they will put their final stigma on Coercion. What is Coercion? It is nothing but domestic Jingoism. It is begotten in the same spirit; it is conducted by the same people; it is doomed to the same defeat." At the second sitting, Mr. Stansfeld moved a resolution for the reform of the Registration Laws, "One man, one vote," shorter Parliaments, the putting of the official expenses of elections on the rates, holding all elections on one and the same day, and recognizing the principle of the payment of members. Mr. Causton, in supporting the resolution, said it would add at least 200,000 voters to the registers in London. Mr. Picton moved a resolution in favour of a Free Breakfast Table, and Professor Stuart presented a motion demanding "that all representative governing bodies in London and elsewhere, shall be put in possession of all the larger powers now enjoyed by the other great Municipalities of the country, and that Local Government shall be developed and completed by the establishment of District and Parish Councils." These resolutions were carried unanimously. The Council also reaffirmed its repeated declarations in favour of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Established Churches in Wales and Scotland, adding that Welsh Disestablishment and Disendowment should be dealt with as soon as Irish Home Rule was attained. The other points of the resolution



were, Free Education in schools under popular representative control, the establishment of continuation schools and increased facilities for Technical and Intermediate education, the direct popular veto on the liquor traffic, the equalization of the death duties upon real and personal property, the just division of rates between owner and occupier, the taxation of mining royalties, the better housing of the working classes, the extension of the Factory Acts, and the mending or ending of the House of Lords. A special Conference of the Women's Liberal Federation was held at the same time, and Mr. Stansfeld, speaking at a meeting of Liberal agents and secretaries, presided over by Mr. B. L. Green, described the Electors Qualification and Registration Bill, of which he has the charge in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone made two great speeches, the first, in response to addresses from the Liberals of the 44 Parliamentary constituencies in and near Manchester, and from the 90,000 Irish residents in Manchester. Speaking of the Sugar Convention Bill, Mr. Gladstone described it as "a Bill for increasing the price of sugar, a Bill for enabling the British market to be influenced, and perhaps vitally influenced, by the formation of Sugar 'Rings' in foreign countries, a Bill to repress, if not to extinguish, a most valuable trade in this country—the trade in preserved fruits, a trade which goes directly to help the cottage gardener, to help the orchard farmer, to help every man who applies himself to using the excellent facilities of this country and its climate for the production of fruit." In a great meeting in the Free Trade Hall, Mr. Gladstone spoke of the effect of the by-elections on the Tory party. They are taking consolation, he said, not in the next election but in the election next but one, or even next but two. Lord Hartington said in a speech at Ilkley: "It will be our duty"—that is when he finds himself with a majority on the other side of the House—"it will be our duty to fight the measure stage by stage, to make attack after attack upon the principles which we condemn ; it will

be our duty to raise every difficulty to the passing of such a measure ; it will be our duty to compel the consideration and the discussion by the country of such a measure, and, in short, to use every resource which Parliamentary or extra-Parliamentary efforts might give us to prevent so great a change from being hastily or hurriedly made." "If such language as that which is now used by Lord Hartington, had been used by Mr. Parnell," said Mr. Gladstone, "I want to know what the Tories and what the party of Lord Hartington would have said. They would have said, 'Here are men who look to our Parliamentary institutions with a view to pour upon them contempt and disparagement ; here are men who do not understand the first principles of our Constitution, namely, that the minority, after being fairly heard, must submit to the majority ; here are men who by going to war with these first principles show themselves to be unworthy of the benefits of the British Constitution.' That is what would have been said of those very words of Lord Hartington if they had proceeded from the lips of Mr. Parnell." Mr. Gladstone concluded a great speech, in which he once more reviewed the whole Irish question, by saying, "Our party has stood together in the evil day. I believe there is hardly a case upon record when any party has more firmly and more unanimously acted for the purposes for which it was returned to Parliament. We have bated no jot of heart or hope. In the day of adversity—the day of a defeat which amounted to discomfiture—we still retained all our confidence, for we felt that we had to deal with a noble and a generous people in the people of England, and that even if for a moment they might be misled in a case where traditional prejudice has been so strong as to be hard to discipline, yet that generosity and that loyalty of character will prevail, the voice of justice will be heard, the cause of justice will find its way to the heart and the mind of the nation, and the day is not and cannot be distant when its triumph will be at hand." Mr. John Morley afterwards made a

political tour to Scotland and spoke at Glasgow and at Dundee.

At the close of the year Mr. Parnell was the object of some important Liberal demonstrations. He went to Nottingham on the 16th of December, and on the next day, in company with Mr. Arnold Morley, he was entertained at luncheon at the Liberal Club by Mr. Alderman Gripper. In the evening he spoke at a large meeting in the Albert Hall, where he had a very enthusiastic reception and concluded an effective speech by saying "All we want is that our people shall remain steady, and we feel convinced that the Liberal party, who have never yet lost a battle, will win, and win triumphantly, headed by their glorious leader, in the great coming contest." On the eighteenth Mr. Parnell went to Hawarden, his first visit to Mr. Gladstone's home. He stayed at Hawarden the night and went on the next day to Liverpool, where he addressed the Irishmen of Liverpool in the City Hall; and was afterwards entertained at a banquet at the Reform Club, where Mr. W. H. Meade-King presented him with £3,500 as "a free-will offering of many thousands of his sympathizers belonging to various nationalities within these kingdoms, in token of their heartfelt sympathy with him, and with his colleagues in the struggles in which they are engaged." In the course of his reply Mr. Parnell said, "I am glad that you are able to rejoice with me to-night that we stand on the winning side. At the time when this fund was started we had no trace of the forger. At that time *The Times* had announced that it would decline to give up the names of the persons from whom they received those documents; that is to say that they would refuse to give us any clue to enable us to demonstrate our innocence. We had no clue to those men, not the slightest. We had to search in the dark. We had a tribunal carefully chosen by our enemies from the ranks of our political opponents, a tribunal who would not be wilfully unfair I grant you, but who from the necessity of the case were bound to be prejudiced. Every



step was taken, every plan was laid by the Government and its co-conspirators to prevent us, my colleagues and myself, from removing this cloud from our reputation. I never could have credited that a political party, a great political party of a great country, that a Government of a great country, could have stooped so low and could have been so mean as to use such methods against a political opponent, and a political opponent who was the weaker and the smaller man, the representative of a poor country, an impoverished nation, and an oppressed people struggling for their lives. And they hounded these wretches on to assassinate us by blows in the back. It was not English. It was not brave. It was not manly. The English people, when they get the chance, will show this miserable Government that they are not their leaders; that they represent them as a result of deceit and misrepresentation, and they will no longer allow the name of England to be lowered by association with such miserable conspirators and with such cowardly attacks."

## CHAPTER XIX.

*A YEAR OF DISAPPOINTMENTS.*

THE most interesting political event at the beginning of the year 1890 was the appearance on the fourth of January of the first number of *The Speaker*, a new Liberal weekly paper, under the able and experienced management of Mr. Wemyss Reid. The defection of *The Spectator* had left the Liberal party insufficiently represented in the weekly press. In *The Speaker* they gained a thoroughly able and efficient organ, conducted with complete political knowledge and the highest literary power. An epidemic of influenza had been rapidly spreading on the continent, and at the opening of the year news came that the Czar, the German Emperor, the President of the French Republic, and many notable people all over Europe were suffering from it. In the first week of the New Year Lord Salisbury, Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Labouchere were prostrated, and a good deal of alarm was felt at its rapid spread. A political legacy of the old year was a small dispute with Portugal; in which Lord Salisbury seemed disposed to take a high-handed course, that many felt to be altogether unworthy of a great nation towards a little one. The dispute arose in South Africa, where Major Serpa Pinto had invaded the Makololo country, boarded English steamers, captured two British flags and declared the land to be Portuguese territory. This act of aggression on the recognized sphere of British influence aroused some indignation in England, and Lord Salisbury telegraphed a strong despatch to Lisbon, asking for "prompt and distinct assurances that there would

be no attempt to settle the territorial question by acts of force, or to establish Portuguese dominion over districts where British interests predominate." Lord Salisbury asked "for an immediate declaration that the forces of Portugal will not be permitted to interfere with the British settlements on the Shiré and Nyassa, or with the country of the Makololo or the country under the government of Lobengula, or any other country declared under British protection." The reply from Lisbon was only partly satisfactory, and Lord Salisbury asked for further assurances. These were not satisfactorily given, and on the 11th of January an ultimatum was sent to which the Portuguese Government yielded at once.

In domestic politics there was an intimation of coming trouble in the announcement that Mr. O'Shea had begun proceedings against his wife for divorce, and that Mr. Parnell was the co-respondent. The success of the Dock strike in the preceding autumn encouraged the workmen of the South Metropolitan Gas Company to strike against a profit-sharing scheme proposed by the Manager, but this strike failed to attain the success which had attended the movement of the Dockers, and after some weeks of distressing controversy and a good deal of suffering, the men had to admit their defeat. Not even the influenza hindered the progress of political debate. The Coercionist Coalition had recovered from the overthrow which the exposure of Pigott's forgeries had inflicted upon them, and were again confident. The campaign in the constituencies was opened on the 2nd of January by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who in a speech at Leamington spoke of what he called "the extreme moderation of Mr. Parnell's recent speeches." Mr. Bryce, speaking at Canterbury on the 11th, summed up one aspect of the political situation by saying that Mr. Balfour's pretended success in pacifying Ireland was "the best advertised thing I have ever known." The eight hours movement was now becoming urgent. Lord Dunraven, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Sweating, in speeches at Liverpool and Birmingham strongly advocated the adoption



of the eight hours day. Lord Randolph Churchill also spoke in favour of the proposal. The Miners' Federation of Great Britain at a conference at Birmingham on the 22nd of January unanimously agreed that a Bill should be introduced into Parliament providing that no person should be employed underground for more than eight hours in any one day of twenty-four hours. They sent a deputation to Mr. Gladstone, to Lord Randolph Churchill, and to Lord Dunraven. The two latter were inclined to accept State interference, while Mr. Gladstone, though in full sympathy with the demand that no man should work more than eight hours a day in a mine, advised the men to endeavour first of all to attain their end by independent action. In a great speech at Chester on the 22nd of January, Mr. Gladstone passed the whole political situation in review. Speaking of the dispute with Portugal he said, "It must be a subject of regret to every Englishman if an occasion has arisen, however pressing and urgent that occasion, which places us for a time in political collision or controversy with one of those small States which it is the special function of England to cherish and protect." Speaking of domestic affairs, he said that the proceedings towards Mr. Parnell, taken as a whole, "beginning with the forgery of letters in *The Times*, and then carried on by the Government and the majority of the House of Commons in defiance of all precedent and usage, and in utter violation of their own express declarations; the appointment of the most cumbrous and most costly method of procedure in a matter which a Committee of their own, in consonance with Parliamentary usage, would have disposed of in a few weeks, possibly even a few days, constitutes a case of oppression, practised upon an individual by the Legislative Chamber and by the Executive Government of this country, which has had no parallel in the conduct of the proceedings of Parliament since the evil reign of Charles II." On the same day Mr. Goschen addressed his constituents at Princes Hall. He regretted the disagreement with Portugal, which he called a "high-

spirited little kingdom," but said it had been forced upon the Government. He vindicated his financial arrangements and threw out a hint of a busy Session. "Ministers," he said, "are literally steeped in Bills." On the 28th of January there was a large meeting at St. James's Hall to protest against the buying out of Irish landlords at the expense of British tax-payers. On the 29th Mr. John Morley was present at a great Liberal demonstration at the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool. Speaking of the Irish question he said, "In old days they used to submit persons to the ordeal by fire. They used to send them walking bare-footed among red-hot ploughshares. That is an ordeal to which the leader of the Irish party has been subjected. I don't care what destiny the future may have in store for Mr. Parnell, however the future may go, at least it cannot deprive him of the honour and the fame of having been the first Irish statesman to bring the people of England and the people of Ireland together, and I, for one, whatever may happen in the future, will never cease to acknowledge the debt which both nations—the people of Great Britain and the people of Ireland—owe to Mr. Parnell's energy, tenacity, and true statesmanship." After showing the failure of Coercion, and the somersaults performed by the Tory Government in the matters of Land Purchase and Free Education, he said there was no justice in Ireland now, and there would be none until Irishmen had a Legislative Body of their own, a supervising body of their own. The Liberal party regarded Ireland's demand as a reasonable one. "We are convinced," he said, "that you can have no security for good Government if the voice of the representation is stifled, is overborne, is disregarded, is set at naught. Arduous as is the struggle into which the English Liberals have now cast themselves for the deliverance of Ireland, long as the struggle may be, at least let us be sure that when the eye of future time turns back to the scenes on which you and I now gaze, it will be seen that our enterprise marks a great and far-shining land-mark

in the history of the people of Ireland, and the history of the British Empire." An action for libel brought by Mr. Parnell against *The Times* ended in a verdict by consent, *The Times* paying Mr. Parnell £5,000 and undertaking to pay not only the costs which are legally recoverable in such cases, but also the whole of the expense he had incurred in the matter. This final recognition of the complete failure of the Campaign of Calumny took place only a week before the reassembling of Parliament. The Tory papers had now become very anxious to dissociate themselves from *The Times* in this matter. *The Morning Post* suddenly discovered that it had never approved of the Commission, and had always prophesied that it would end in disaster, and *The Standard* gave as little prominence to the case as possible. Mr. Bryce at Cardiff, Mr. H. H. Fowler at Willenhall, and Mr. O'Brien at Manchester kept up with vigour the struggle out of doors. There were rumours of differences in the Cabinet on the question of Free Education, a question about which there was much correspondence in the papers.

Parliament met on the 11th of February. The Queen's Speech told of the Portuguese dispute and its settlement, of the Conference on the Slave Trade, which had been called at Brussels, of the Commercial Convention with Egypt, and of a provisional arrangement with Bulgaria. A Convention with Germany and the United States, with respect to the Government of Servia, an Extradition Treaty with the United States, which awaited the ratification of the Senate, the despatch of a Commissioner to Switzerland, and an approving word for the Conference now being held to discuss the important question of the Federation of the Australasian Colonies, made up the foreign portion of the Speech. The domestic part began with Ireland, and Parliament was told there had been an improvement which made it possible very largely to restrict the area in which the Coercion Act was in force. Proposals were promised for increasing the number of occupying owners, for



“extending to Ireland the principles of local self-government, which have already been adopted in England and Scotland, so far as they are applicable to that country” ; and for improving the material well-being of the population in the poorer districts. Land Transfer, Private Bill Legislation in Scotland, Tithes, Employers Liability, Winding-up Insolvent Companies, Public Health in London, Working-class Dwellings, Savings Banks, and Friendly Societies Regulation, were all mentioned as subjects for legislation. A Crofters Commission was announced, and better provision for camps and barracks suggested.

The Report of the Parnell Commission was only issued two days after the meeting of Parliament, but the Liberal leaders did not wait for it. Before the debate on the Address began, Sir William Harcourt interposed a motion “that the publication in *The Times* newspaper of April, 1887, of a letter falsely alleged to have been written by Mr. Parnell, a member of this House, and the comment thereon in the said newspaper, is a false and scandalous libel, and a breach of the privileges of this House.” He told the disgraceful story of the forgery and its exposure, and said, “This was no hasty and inconsiderate action by some obscure libeller. It was avowed to have been a deliberate attempt to influence and to pervert the judgment of Parliament, by an accusation which was calculated to destroy the character of the leader of the Irish party, to destroy that party and the hopes of the nation which that party represented. Does it comport with the dignity and honour of the House of Commons to pass over such a transaction as this forgery in silence, as if it was a matter of indifference to them. This was not a hasty action of some inexperienced person which might be passed over and forgotten. In the cases to which I have referred, where the breach of privilege was not insisted upon, an apology was made in this House by the persons who committed the offence. There has been no apology made by *The Times* newspaper to the House of Commons. There has been

what is called an apology made to the member for Cork. Are we to pass over this in silence? It is not a thing which has been done in a corner. It is a thing which is known and remembered in every corner of the civilized world. It cannot be passed over and forgotten, it will never be forgotten, and in my opinion it cannot be passed over." Sir John Gorst, who spoke like a man half ashamed of his cause, pleaded that the matter had been the subject of a libel procedure elsewhere; that it was to some extent *sub judice*; that the forged letters were now an old story, and that the breach of privilege resolution would have been too late even twelve months ago. He proposed an amendment, declining to treat the publication of the letter by *The Times*, or the comments upon it, as a breach of privilege. Mr. Gladstone said, "The House has been too glad when a person accused of committing a breach of privilege, if he happened to be a member of this House, has been ready to purge his offence by apology. Has this offence been purged by apology? I admit that something called an apology was spoken by the honourable and learned gentleman the Attorney General, but there are apologies which are a gross aggravation of the offence." Sir John Gorst had said that nearly three years had elapsed since the offence. "Yes," said Mr. Gladstone, "nearly three years which he and his friends have contrived shall elapse. He dropped a word about our having made all the capital we could out of the forged letters, I should have thought that the very last phrase which the right honourable gentleman would have thought proper to introduce into this debate would be the making of capital out of these letters. His capital was made on the 18th of April, 1887. In the division of that day the capital was realized and stored." Mr. Balfour said, "We are here discussing the wickedness of calumnious charges, and I for my own part am ready to use words of any strength you like, in condemnation of the infamous procedure by which those forged letters were produced. But to imply that *The Times* know-

ingly used as a political weapon letters which they had good ground to think were forged, is after all as bad a calumny as any I have heard alluded to." Mr. Labouchere reminded the Government of their attitude when the forged letter was published, of their scornful reception of Mr. Parnell's denial, and of the complete absence, from the first, of any evidence for the genuineness of the letters. Then what was the plan of *The Times* before the Commission?

Mr. Macdonald was to be put in the box and to state that the letters had been obtained from a most important, a most respectable person, but that that most competent and respectable person would be killed by those enemies of humanity behind him if he were to give his name. Then the expert was to be brought forward and the nefarious plan of *The Times* would have succeeded, had it not been that by a happy accident the forgeries were discovered, and there was a complete exposure of what I do not hesitate to call a vile and base conspiracy on the part of *The Times*. Pigott himself did not want to go into the box. He got frightened. He thought there might be serious consequences. That meant that he did not want to perjure himself. There sits the counsel for *The Times* opposite, and I dare him to deny it. *The Times* conveyed to Pigott that if he would only go into the box and swear up—tell the truth I believe they called it—they would provide for him afterwards. Then came the disastrous cross-examination of Pigott. Pigott confessed, and then occurred a very remarkable thing. After his confession Pigott withdrew a portion of it, and moreover sent over a telegram to Ireland to his servant to destroy certain papers, among which he had stated were the letters of Houston to himself. We have never yet got to the bottom of that matter, and I will tell the House what probably it does not know. Pigott sent over certain bank-notes to his family in Ireland. The police took it into their heads that I had given Pigott these notes. They made investigation, and what does the House think they discovered?—that these notes had been given to Pigott and came directly from *The Times* within ten days of his flight from this country. I should like to have some explanation in regard to this matter. The numbers of the notes were obtained; they were traced back to *The Times*, and, what was still more remarkable, Mr. Soames distinctly stated that he had not given Pigott any money, or hardly sufficient to pay his hotel bill during the time he was a witness.

Mr. Parnell, in a dignified and powerful speech, reminded the Government that they had told him that he ought to go before a jury. He said:—



I consider that it was absolutely necessary, in order to show that that letter was a forgery, which I knew it to be, that I should show from whom *The Times* got that letter. But I recognized that it would be impossible for us to compel *The Times* to give up the name of this person in an ordinary court of justice, and that we should be left just as badly off as we were before, and that an inquiry before a jury and an ordinary court of law would consequently prove to be abortive. Before going before a jury I took steps to ascertain who the forger was, and I think I have been justified in the result. For when, in the case of O'Donnell and Walter, the question as to the person from whom *The Times* got this letter was raised, the Attorney General, acting as counsel for *The Times*, said that under no circumstances would *The Times* consent to give up the name of the person from whom they got the letters. That is the answer I should have had if I had gone before a jury in the first instance. I should have been left with the opinion of all the trained experts of the country against me. . . . We asked for a Select Committee, because I knew that a Select Committee would have the power to compel *The Times* to do a thing which it could not be compelled to do before a jury and an ordinary court of law ; and I knew that, having that knowledge, in forty-eight hours we could have disproved the letters. . . . If you had chosen to give the Committee which was asked for on the 6th of May, eighteen days after the letter was published—we would have demonstrated the forgery of that letter within forty-eight hours after the Committee had commenced to sit. . . . The reason you refused was, because you wanted to use the question of the forged letters as a political engine. You did not care whether they were forged or not. You saw that it was impossible for me, or for anybody under the circumstances, to prove that the letters were forgeries, and it was a very good subject for you to win by-elections with, and to send your stump orators over the country and make capital out of it. . . . Neither the Attorney General, nor the Government to which he belongs, will be held blameless by the time this question is ultimately disposed of. The Attorney General offered himself as counsel for *The Times* without any investigation into the genuineness of the letters, without having taken the most ordinary precautions to ascertain that his case was a good one. He staked his great position at the bar, and his still more important position as the first Law Officer of the Crown, that the Lord Frederick Cavendish letter was genuine. He made himself a tool of *The Times* for disseminating by means of these so-called judicial proceedings, in the case of O'Donnell and Walter, still further and more atrocious libels, for which *The Times* could not have been punished had it not most incautiously commented upon them in its leader next day. The managers of *The Times*, and probably the Attorney General, thought that they were disseminating them from the

safe position of a court of justice, without, as I have said, the most elementary precautions to ascertain the truth of what he was asserting. I warned the Attorney General after he had published these libels, after he had used his high position to protect their publication, and obtain for them a credence that they would never otherwise have obtained,—I warned him in this House, after the conclusion of the case of O'Donnell and Walter, that he ought to have known the origin of the letters before he went further. I asked him publicly in this House whether he had inquired into their origin, and whether he knew from whom *The Times* had received them. The learned gentleman was dumb, and the proceedings subsequently before the Special Commission showed that, not only the Attorney General, but the managers of *The Times* had not taken, up to this period—I think not till the beginning of October, after the Commission had been sitting some time—the trouble even to ascertain from whom the young man Houston had got the letters. Such recklessness would be incredible if it were not a mournful and sorrowful fact. Leader as I am of a party in a minority, a party which as an Irish party has always been a minority, I should be sorry to treat my most powerful opponent with the depth of incredible meanness and cowardice with which I have been treated.

Mr. Parnell then suggested the insertion of the word “forged” in the resolution, and Mr. W. H. Smith at once accepted the proposal. Sir William Harcourt’s motion was negatived by 260 to 212, a majority of only 48, and Sir John Gorst’s amendment, with the word “forged” added to it, was adopted. In the debate on the Address Mr. Parnell moved an amendment condemning the whole policy of the Government in Ireland; there was a great debate, which lasted three nights, and the motion was rejected on the 18th of February by 307 to 240, a narrow majority of 67.

Dr. Clarke moved and Mr. Seymour Keay, in a maiden speech, seconded an amendment to the Address in favour of Home Rule for Scotland, which, after an amendment by Mr. D. Crawford, making the members for Scotland a kind of Scottish Grand Committee to sit in Scotland, had been rejected by a majority of 166, was itself defeated by a division on the 20th, in which 181 voted against the motion and 141 for it. Mr. Stansfeld moved an amendment

expressing regret that the Government did not propose to proceed with the Constitution of District and Parochial Councils in Great Britain, "or of carrying further in the Metropolis and elsewhere the organization and powers of local government." There was a good debate, but the motion was defeated by 254 to 181. On the same day Mr. Arthur Acland moved to express regret "that as Free Education in elementary schools has been granted in Scotland, no reference is made in your Majesty's most gracious Speech to legislative proposals for giving similar advantages to the rest of the United Kingdom." Sir William Hart-Dyke said the question must not be lightly undertaken by any government, and could not be approached during the present Session. Mr. Stanhope said no government would think of inserting in the Queen's Speech a reference to a subject which they did not honestly think there was a reasonable chance of their being able to deal with. Mr. Chamberlain made a long speech in favour of Free Education. He shared the regret which Mr. Acland's motion expressed, but said he would not vote to displace the Government. The amendment was rejected by 223 against 163, and Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Jesse Collings were ironically cheered by the Liberals, as they went into the lobby to vote against it. A motion by Mr. Cuninghame Graham, that it was desirable that the representatives of this country should discuss the eight hours question at the International Conference on Labour Legislation at Berlin, was rejected by 198 to 87.

Outside Parliament, the Report of the Parnell Commission re-awakened public interest in the question of the forged letters. At a great Liberal demonstration at Bath on the 26th of February, at which Mr. John Mellor took the chair, Sir William Harcourt made one of his most brilliant speeches; and on the same day Sir Charles Russell summed up the history and results of the Commission in a great speech to the Cambridge University Liberal Club. Sir William Harcourt, who spoke for an hour and three-quarters,



went through the whole history of the Commission, which he said was a nine days wonder. After going over the chief points in the Report, and showing how all the serious charges against the Irish members had been disproved, he said, "There is a curious thing that the Commissioners say: they say that evictions do not seem to be the cause of crime, and they give some figures. They say that in the three years 1849-52 there were 58,000 families evicted. By whom? By the landlords. They have always taken occasion of the famine and distress of the tenants to get rid of the people. They evicted in those three years 400,000 people, who were thrown out of their homes, and were many of them starved to death by the wayside—a terrible picture of landlordism in Ireland, that landlordism which is called 'the English garrison.'" What are they going to do with this Report? he asked. "They say these men are criminals; will they prosecute them for treason or conspiracy? if not, why not? Is the Government of the Queen going to compound a felony? Mr. Parnell has prosecuted them, and he has succeeded. They won't prosecute him because they know that they will fail." Sir Charles Russell went carefully through the melancholy story which I have already told; and showed the steps, every one of them characterized, not merely by carelessness but by a determination not to know the origin of the letters, which all those who had to do with them exhibited.

The answer to Sir William Harcourt's question, What was the Government going to do with the Commission Report? was given within a few days. On the 3rd of March Mr. W. H. Smith proposed a resolution adopting the Report, thanking the Commissioners "for their just and impartial conduct in the matters referred to them," and ordering the Report to be entered on the journals of the House. In the course of his speech he announced that the Government intended to do no more with the Report than thus to enter it on the journals. Mr. Gladstone moved

as an amendment "That this House deems it to be a duty to record its reprobation of the false charges, of the gravest and most odious description, based on calumny and on forgery, which have been brought against members of this House, and particularly against Mr. Parnell; and while declaring its satisfaction at the exposure of these calumnies, this House expresses its regret for the wrong inflicted and the suffering and loss endured through a protracted period, by reason of these acts of flagrant iniquity." Mr. Gladstone made one of his most brilliant and impressive speeches, in which he brought out with irresistible force, what even Mr. W. H. Smith seemed to overlook, the moral responsibility which rested on the House of Commons, on the Government, and on the country, to apologize for and to reverse, as far as lay in their power, the immense wrong which had been done in their name. "On whom was the charge made?" asked Mr. Gladstone. "It was made upon a man who, looked upon in his public character, was charged with the leadership of a people. . . . It was not cast at random before the country. It was cast with the solemn assurance that imposed even upon members of this House, in these terms:—'After the most careful and minute scrutiny, we are satisfied that the letter is authentic.' Was there a scrutiny at all? Was there anything careful about it? Yes, there was something careful, and that was a carefulness not to know. Mr. Macdonald went into the box. He appeared upon his oath, not closed up behind the curtains of the office of *The Times* newspaper—he appeared upon his oath, and he said, 'I abstained from asking Mr. Houston why the envelopes were wanting, and from whom he got the letters.' That was his 'careful and minute scrutiny.' Again: 'I particularly avoided the subject of origin.' Having ventured upon forgery, having carried calumny to its climax, the whole of this was crowned with falsehood, developed in the most solemn form, and given to the credulous, whom party prejudice for a moment misled them to assert, that they were treading, not in the

paths of cruelty and tyranny, but of justice. Is it an immoderate demand that after an occurrence like this—after a poisoned weapon has been aimed at such a person, and aimed with the solemn assurance that nothing was so dear to those who launched it as the strictest observance of the law—is it too much for me to ask the House, which, by implication and inferentially, had given countenance to the exterior parts of these proceedings, that we shall record our judgment upon this unexampled occurrence? . . . . . I appeal from the party opposite to the party opposite; I appeal from them as a party, to them as individuals; I ask you as citizens—I won't say as Christians, but as citizens and men—to consider this case. I ask you to acknowledge the law of equal and reciprocal moral obligation. I ask you to place yourselves for a moment—and not in a mass amongst whom responsibility is diffused and dis-severed until it becomes inoperative and worthless—but I ask you individually, man by man, to place yourselves in the position of the hon. member for Cork, as the victim of this frightful outrage. Is it possible that you will do that without seeing that after all this care, this suffering, after all that the hon. member has gone through—and I believe there is no parallel to it for at least two hundred years—something remains due to him, and that it cannot be smaller than that which is contained in my motion? Give your judgment, give it as men, but do not be satisfied by giving a judgment that may be sustained by the cheers of the majority in this House, in a victorious or favourable decision. Give such a judgment as will bear the scrutiny of the heart and conscience, when a man betakes himself to his chamber and is still. Of such a judgment I have no fear. For such a judgment I ask you, I entreat you, I urge you, I might almost say, in the name of the law of reciprocal obligation, I respectfully demand it of you. Give such a judgment, in the terms of the Amendment, describing and declaring that which is after all but a part, and but a feebly drawn part, of the wrongs inflicted; give that judgment, accede to our



demands, accede to our prayer, and pass this proposed scanty reparation for an enormous and unheard-of wrong."

This eloquent appeal was in vain. It was loudly cheered from both sides of the House, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach could not help testifying to its fervid and glowing eloquence. Had the division taken place at once, the better nature which Mr. Gladstone's words had touched would have influenced the vote. But the Government and their majority had no desire to do any act of reparation to the men who had been libelled and calumniated in their interest. Their feeling, when they looked on the matter only as party politicians and put their better selves aside, was one of soreness and regret that a very useful weapon in the political conflict had exploded in their hands. On the fourth night of the debate the Government did not even take the trouble to keep a House, and it was ignominiously counted out. The subject was allowed to come on again on Monday, the 10th of March, when the discussion was concluded by a speech from Sir William Harcourt. "Yours," he said, "is a policy of exasperation, of irritation, and of insult. To that we oppose a policy of charity, of generosity, of forgiveness"—here he was interrupted by shouts of laughter from the Ministerial Benches, but he kept on—"of conciliation, and of peace, and upon these two issues we demand, in the language of your criminal tribunals, that the Irish members shall be tried by their country, upon which, I believe, they will have a good deliverance. We demand that the issue shall be tried, not by three judges, but by the three nations of a united Empire." Mr. Gladstone's Amendment was then rejected by 339 to 268, a Government majority of 71. Of the Dissident Liberals 60 voted in the majority, and eight were absent.

On the next night Lord Randolph Churchill opened the debate in a speech of remarkable power. He said the whole of the proceedings in respect to the Parnell Commission were tainted and vitiated from beginning to

end by their utterly unconstitutional character. He traced the steps by which the Government had gone in its despotic course, till the Special Commission Act was forced through by the most ruthless use of the Closure. "When I remember," he said, "the able, forcible, and eloquent speeches which were made by all the members of the Tory party, against the dangers which must surely accrue in the direction of Parliamentary tyranny and oppression on account of what was then an innovation, I own I cannot believe I am sitting among that party who, having made these declarations in 1882, sanctioned the use of the Closure in 1888." It was a procedure, he said, such as would have been gladly used by the Tudors or by the Stuarts; it was a procedure such as that great lawyer Lord Cairns, if he had been alive, would never have allowed the Tory party to adopt. Nemesis had overtaken the Government. The result of its upheaval of the British Constitution had been—Pigott." In conclusion he said, "I look forward to the day alluded to by Mr. Asquith, in his most brilliant speech, when a future Parliament shall expunge from the journals of this House (loud Opposition cheers) the records of these melancholy proceedings, and in taking such action—inspired, I trust, not by party passions, party vindictiveness, party rancour, but acting on constitutional grounds, and on those alone—shall administer to its predecessor a deserved and wholesome rebuke, for having outraged and violated constitutional liberty, and shall establish and set up a sign-post full of warning, of instruction, and of guidance to Parliaments yet unborn." Mr. Chamberlain then came to the rescue of the Government, and after a speech from Mr. Whitbread,—who said he could not believe that the party behind the Government was so lost to a sense of what fair play demanded, as to refuse to give expression by vote to what they had so often uttered as individuals,—Mr. Jennings gave the debate an unexpected turn. He had put an Amendment on the paper expressing condemnation of the conduct of those who were responsible for the

accusations of complicity in murder, brought against members of that House, and declaring that the accusation had been discovered to be based mainly on forged letters, and had been declared by the Commission to be disproved. He now announced that in consequence of Lord Randolph Churchill's speech, he should withdraw his Amendment, but he spoke in its favour, and said no device had been left untried to induce the public to believe that Mr. Parnell and some of his colleagues were murderers and assassins, and he thought they must feel a sympathy with him in his escape from such diabolical charges. His Amendment was then taken up by Mr. Caine, seconded by Sir Walter Foster, and supported by Mr. John Morley ; but on a division was rejected by 321 to 259, a majority of 62, a reduction of 9 from the majority of the previous night.

The death of Mr. A. Craig-Sellar, who had been returned in 1886 by a majority of 801 for the Partick division of Lanarkshire, and who had acted from 1886 to 1888 as the Whip of the Dissident Liberals, made a vacancy for that division. The election took place on the day of the meeting of Parliament ; Sir Charles Tennant was the Liberal candidate, and was opposed by Mr. Parker Smith, Liberal Dissident, who polled 4,148 votes to 3,929 for Sir Charles Tennant, a majority of 219. On the 20th of February Mr. S. T. Evans was returned unopposed for Mid-Glamorgan in the room of the late Mr. C. R. M. Talbot. On the 24th Mr. Alfred Webb, Home Ruler, was returned unopposed for West Waterford. The removal of Mr. Cochrane-Baillie to the House of Lords in succession to his father, Lord Lamington, created a vacancy for the northern division of St. Pancras. Mr. Cochrane-Baillie had been returned in 1886 by a majority of 261 over Mr. T. H. Bolton, who had defeated him in 1885 by 465. Mr. Bolton was again the Liberal candidate. Mr. Bolton was returned by 2,657 against 2,549 for his Conservative opponent, Mr. H. R. Graham, a Liberal majority of 108. This was another gain for the Liberal party. On the 7th of



March there was a contested election in the Stamford division of Lincolnshire. There had been no contest in 1886, and in 1885 the Conservative candidate, Mr. J. Compton Lawrence, who had now been made a judge, had been returned by a majority of 1,001. Mr. Arthur Priestley was the Liberal candidate, and polled 3,954 votes against 4,226 received by Mr. Cust, the Conservative. As compared with 1885 the Tory poll was 395 less, and the Liberal 424 more, thus reducing the Conservative majority to 282. On the 14th of March a vacancy at Stoke-on-Trent, caused by the resignation of Mr. W. Leatham Bright, was filled by the election of Mr. George Leveson-Gower, by 4,157 against 2,926 given to Mr. Shepherd Allen, the Dissident Liberal. Mr. Bright had been returned by a majority of 1,960 in 1885, and by 1,162 in 1886; the Liberal majority had now recovered to 1,231. On the 25th of March there was another election in the Ayr boroughs, when Mr. Somervell was returned as a Conservative, by 2,610 votes to 2,480 given to the Liberal candidate, Mr. E. Routledge. In this case the Conservatives won back a seat that had been wrested from the Dissident Liberals in 1888, when Mr. Sinclair had defeated Mr. Evelyn Ashley by a majority of 63. On the same day Dr. J. A. Rentoul, Conservative, was returned unopposed for East Down in the room of Captain Ker, and on the next day Mr. E. Vesey Knox was returned for West Cavan in the room of the late Mr. Biggar. On the 2nd of April Mr. F. T. Barry, Conservative, was returned for Windsor in the place of Mr. Richardson-Gardner by 1,522 to 972 polled by Mr. W. H. Grenfell, the Liberal candidate; Mr. Richardson-Gardner had been returned unopposed in 1886. On the 10th of April Mr. D. Lloyd George won a Tory seat in the Carnarvon district, vacant by the death of Mr. E. Swetenham. Mr. Swetenham had been returned in 1886 by a majority of 136; the Conservative candidate, Mr. Ellis Nanney, polled 1,945 votes, and Mr. Lloyd George 1,963, a Liberal majority of 18; the Liberal majority in 1885 had been 65.

On the motion for going into Supply on the Army Estimates on the 13th of March, Sir Edward Hamley moved "That it is expedient that after a certain fixed date all deficiencies of the equipment of Volunteers, which are necessary to efficiency, and all debts of corps properly incurred on account of the same, be made good from the public revenues." He said there was no ground for calling on the Volunteers to provide their own equipment. Mr. Stanhope said it was utterly impossible to accept the amendment, for the Government had encouraged the efforts made by the Lord Mayor of London and local authorities in various parts of the kingdom to raise funds by public subscription for Volunteer equipment. The Amendment, however, was carried against the Government by 135 to 102. The Government was again defeated on the 18th of March on a motion of Mr. Buchanan's, declaring "That it is expedient that the duty of maintaining and protecting rights of way in Scotland should be entrusted to the County Councils, and that the laws should be amended, so as to secure a cheaper and more expeditious method of settling cases relating to rights of way than the procedure now in use provides." The motion was seconded by Mr. Bryce, whose constant efforts to protect the rights of the public to full access to the mountains of Scotland makes him the first authority on the subject. The resolution was supported by Mr. Chamberlain and feebly opposed by the Lord Advocate. On a division 110 voted for it, and 97 against it, a majority of 13; Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Kenrick, Mr. Finlay, Lord Wolmer and other Dissentients voting against the Government. On the 20th of March there was a meeting of the Conservative party at the Carlton Club. It was an educational meeting, intended to prepare the party for another great concession to Liberal demands. Lord Salisbury, in a cautious speech, led them gently up to the objects at which they were likely to shy. He told them that the Irish Land Purchase Bill and the Tithes Bill "would entail the exercise of much self-constraint and self-

denial." As to the Land Bill, he said purchase was to be voluntary and not compulsory, and should not impose any burden on Imperial taxation. He then came to the great point, the question of free or, as he preferred to call it, "assisted" education. This was not in the programme of the present Session, and the proposals of the Government were not in the most distant way before the country, but he feared that a good many of them were forming opinions and making pledges upon what they had not seen. He did not ask them to pledge themselves to support Free Education, but to refrain from hostile criticisms of the Government policy, until they had seen it. Suppose that the subject were left untouched by the present Government, and their opponents got a majority in a future Parliament, they would so deal with Free Education as to sweep the Voluntary Schools away. Either, therefore, they must deal with it now, so as to safeguard and protect the Voluntary Schools, or must leave those Schools to their enemies. If they chose to deal with assisted education themselves, they might put the Voluntary Schools in a position from which no future hostile majority could dislodge them; but if they chose to pass the question by, it would probably pronounce their doom. On the question of Local Government for Ireland, he said that nothing could be done until the Land Purchase Bill was passed.

On the next night there were important debates in both Houses. In the House of Lords Lord Salisbury moved a resolution similar to that approving the Report of the Parnell Commission which had been carried in the House of Commons. Now that the forged letters were no longer of any use, Lord Salisbury could express his surprise at the prominence which had been given to them. "They have been represented," he said, "as though they charged complicity with murder; I never was able to understand by what alchemy that meaning was extracted from these forged letters." There was not in his speech the slightest intimation of any regret that such forgeries had been



resorted to for the purpose of discrediting a political opponent, or any word of sympathy with the men who had thus been unjustly assailed. Lord Herschell concluded a noble speech by saying, "It is not many years since it was thought to be a disgrace to an English politician to be in correspondence with Mazzini, and to-day I see that Italy subscribes 100,000 francs for a statue to his memory. When the story of this great drama comes to be written on the page of history, it may be that the praise and blame will be allotted in a very different fashion from that in which we are disposed to allot it to-night, and that those who are now the objects of your condemnation, will not have the most cause to regret that this Report ever found its way upon the journals of the House." Lord Rosebery said, "The net result of the Commission has been to fine Mr. Parnell £40,000 for having been found not guilty. If it had been the case of a Conservative peer, or that rarer specimen, a Liberal Unionist, would he have been left to pay £40,000?" Had they no apology to offer to Mr. Parnell for the treatment he had been subjected to? Let Lord Salisbury place himself in Mr. Parnell's position. Liberals had on a former occasion charged him with embroiling the country in an Afghan War; suppose they had produced some forged document, some Schouvaloff memorandum, to influence Parliament against him, would they not have offered him the largest and amplest reparation in their power? "I have always understood," added Lord Rosebery, "that to a high-minded man it is a pleasure to make such an atonement as ought to have been added to this resolution; but if the noble Marquis is determined to withhold the apology, he is making a mistake, even from his own point of view, and he will find out his mistake; he has already found it out in the elections which have occurred since the Commissioners made their Report." It was a disastrous mistake, which would not only be felt here and in Ireland, but would tingle to the furthest corners of the Empire. In all the scattered habitations of the

Irish race it would be known that the Government had placed the Irish leader in judgment, that they had brought gross calumnies to bear upon him, that they had inflicted upon him an enormous fine, and that when it had been found that these charges were based on calumny and were absolutely untrue, they had declined to give him the ordinary apology that would be given to any private individual. The motion was agreed to without a division.

In the House of Commons Mr. Labouchere brought forward his motion, which he had proposed in 1885, in 1888, and in 1889, "That in the opinion of this House it is contrary to the true principles of representative government and injurious to their efficiency, that any person should sit and vote in Parliament by right of birth, and it is therefore desirable to put an end to any such existing rights." The motion was again defeated by 201 to 139. Mr. Balfour introduced the Irish Land Purchase Bill on the 24th of March; it was a large and complicated scheme, which may be briefly described as a reproduction on a smaller scale of the rejected Irish Land Bill of 1886. It proposed to create a new Land Department which was to absorb all the five public bodies then dealing with Irish land. Irish landlords and tenants were to come to a voluntary agreement for the transfer of the holdings to the tenants, and if the agreement was sanctioned by the land court, the whole of the purchase money, if it did not exceed twenty times the net rent, was to be advanced by the State. The landlord was to be paid in a special  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. stock, and the tenant was to pay an annuity for 49 years of four per cent. on the money advanced. Thus, in a case where the net rental was £100 a year and the purchase price was say £1,700, the tenant would pay £80 a year for the first five years, and £68 a year for the remainder of the 49 years. There were elaborate arrangements for security to the tenants, to the landlord, and to the State, so elaborate that *The Daily News* described the Bill as "Mr. Balfour's puzzle." *The Manchester Guardian*

said it was Mr. Gladstone's Land Bill of 1886 over again with far less advantageous terms for the British tax-payer. *The Spectator* spoke of it as not nearly large enough, as too elaborate, and too full of precautions—a measure that the English electorate would never understand. *The Speaker* said that the House listened to Mr. Balfour's exposition of the Bill with growing perplexity; "the Tory party wishing to encourage their leader, but not following him sufficiently to be able to judge when they ought to cheer." The Second Reading was proposed on the 21st of April, when Mr. Parnell moved its rejection. In the course of a speech which greatly impressed the House, Mr. Parnell pointed out that of the money advanced under the Ashbourne Act, to the end of December 1888, 34 owners had received £2,250,000 out of £3,792,000 advanced to 530 owners. Six per cent. of the owners who sold had got away with 57 per cent. of the whole amount of purchase money. The Duke of Abercorn had had £267,000, the Marquis of Bath £290,000, the Duke of Leinster £244,000, the Marquis of Waterford £124,000, the Salters Company £230,000, the Fishmongers Company £118,000, the Skinners Company £103,000. This was up to the end of 1888, and they had had a good deal more since then. He suggested the outlines of a scheme of his own, as an alternative to that of the Government. The adjourned debate was opened on the 24th of April by Mr. Gladstone, who expressed his regret that he was unable to support the Bill. He objected to it that it was not accepted by Irishmen, that the proposed use of National credit was opposed to the verdict of the country at the last general election, that it made the State the landlord, and that it enabled the present landlord to bring an irresistible pressure to bear on the tenant to extort from him a very large part of the immense boon which the Bill conferred upon him. Mr. Goschen intimated that the Government might be induced to accept Mr. Parnell's scheme and incorporate it in the Bill. On the 28th Mr. Dillon opened



the debate and Mr. Chamberlain suggested a scheme of his own, by which, he said, they would get rid of the direct communication between the Government and the tenant, and there would be an Irish authority as landlord instead of the British Government. Sir William Harcourt asked whether Mr. Chamberlain's speech was in favour of the Bill or against it. The point on which he most concurred with Mr. Chamberlain was that it was impossible to work satisfactorily any system of Land Purchase in Ireland until a system of Local Government had been established there. Mr. John Morley said that the last election was won on two points, one was "No Land Purchase," and the other was the retention of the Irish members. Why were the Irish members retained? Here was a Bill to which they were opposed, yet their opposition was to be disregarded. Not one single representative of the agrarian interest had expressed approval of the measure. Believing that it would increase the confusion in Ireland, would remedy no old evils, and would create some new ones, he should vote against it. The second reading was carried by 348 to 216, a Government majority of 80.

Mr. Goschen introduced his Budget on the 17th of April. He introduced it as a Prosperity Budget. In the bygone financial year the Expenditure had been only £116,000 more than the Estimate, while the Revenue had been more than he had anticipated by £3,221,000. This large increase was chiefly due to the consumption of alcoholic drinks. He called it "a rush to alcohol." This rush to alcohol accounted for more than £1,800,000 of increase. Another item not anticipated at the beginning of the year was £744,000 of increased profit made by the Mint on the circulation of silver. As to the current financial year, the estimate of Expenditure was £86,857,000; the estimated Income was £90,406,000, leaving an estimated surplus of £3,549,000. Out of this surplus he proposed to set aside £300,000 for new barrack accommodation, and £100,000 to carry out the vote of the House

of Commons on the 13th of March, by a grant for Volunteer equipment, and £80,000 to establish a uniform rate of postage to India and the Colonies. He further proposed to transfer to the local authorities threepence in the beer duty, this would cost £386,000. The rest was disposed of in reductions of taxation. Taking twopence off the tea duty, and thus reducing it from sixpence to fourpence sacrificed £1,500,000; reducing the duty on currants from seven shillings a cwt. to two shillings cost £210,000; the duties on silver plate were remitted at a cost of £200,000; and the duty on houses between £20 and £40 a year, which had been sixpence in the pound for shops and ninepence for private houses, he proposed to reduce to twopence and fourpence, and those between £40 and £60 from sixpence and ninepence to fourpence and sixpence. He believed that the relief thus given would affect about 800,000 persons. The reduction in the house tax would amount to £540,000. He proposed also that houses above £20 a year let in tenements to the working classes, if certified by the proper local authorities to have been constructed as dwelling houses fit for families, should be treated as houses below £20 and should be exempt. Taking all these items together the estimated surplus was reduced to £233,000.

There was little that was disputable in this Budget, but with singular ill-luck or reprehensible bad faith, the Government had determined to reintroduce in another form the Licensing proposals which they had been compelled to withdraw in 1888. Mr. Goschen proposed to transfer to the Local Authorities £386,000 a year raised by the beer duty; he further proposed to put an increase of sixpence a gallon as a surtax on spirits; which he reckoned would raise nearly £1,000,000. Here then was a further revenue of £1,304,000 for the Local Authorities; and of this sum England would receive £1,043,000, Scotland £144,000, and Ireland £118,000. The English portion was to be divided thus:—The Metropolitan Police Superannuation

Fund £150,000 ; County Police Fund £150,000 ; Purchase of Licenses £350,000, leaving £393,000 to reinforce the funds of the County Councils. He went on to say that it would be useless to give money for the purchase of Licenses, if at the same time they did not stop the issue of new Licenses. They proposed therefore that until the whole question could be dealt with, there should be no further issue of Licenses at all, except under exceptional circumstances, such as the development of new populations or new wants that may appear. Mr. Goschen thought that in this matter the advocates of temperance and the Licensed Victuallers had the same interest. "The Licensed Victuallers," he said, "do not object to the diminution of the Licensed houses, and the temperance party desire it ardently. We hope that we shall combine them both, and reduce, or at all events restrict, the issue of Licenses." The proposal to suspend the issue of Licenses was a feeble attempt to hide from the temperance party the real significance of this revived proposal of Public House Endowment. In a speech at the Mansion House Mr. Goschen explained why with so large a surplus he had left the income tax alone. He said that he had already reduced it by twopence, and that for the first penny he took off he had to tamper with the Sinking Fund, and so to risk his reputation for financial orthodoxy, and that in remitting the second penny he came into conflict with the members of the Stock Exchange and the drinkers of champagne ; that he had refused to take the ordinary course of putting a penny on the income tax to pay for the increase of the Navy, and he thought it was rather hard in these circumstances that he should receive from an income tax payer such a rebuke as an anonymous correspondent had sent him—"Damn your tea and currants." The general feeling in the City was against what was called at the time a Dissolution Budget : it was contended that the twopence in the pound taken off tea would make no difference to the consumer, and that the reduction of the duty on currants was merely one hesitating step in the right



direction, and that it would have been better to have let tea alone, and swept away altogether the duties on dried fruits of all kinds. On the other hand, the reduction of the house duty was a practical and welcome relief to all the small householders in the Kingdom.

The Friday evening sitting was appropriated on the 18th of April to the discussion of a motion by Mr. Samuel Smith, suggesting "a Conference of the chief commercial nations of the world to consider whether a bi-metallic system can be re-established by International agreement in the interest of all the nations concerned." The motion was seconded by Sir Wm. Houldsworth. Mr. W. H. Smith strongly opposed the resolution. He quoted Sir Robert Peel's opinion that the notion of a double standard was impracticable; for himself, he believed it to be fallacious and impracticable, and that the attempt to carry out the experiment would be disastrous. Sir Wm. Harcourt said it would knock out the keystone of the financial position of England. If the philosophic theory was correct, they might declare to-morrow that the value of silver was the value of gold, for if when the market value is one to twenty, they could say it shall be one to fifteen, why not say one to ten, or one to five, or one to one? He believed the system we had adopted of a mono-metallic standard was a sound system. It was one by which we had stood and flourished, and prospered; it was followed by the other nations of Europe. As Pitt said in a famous sentence, "England has saved herself by her exertions, and will yet, as I trust, save Europe by her example." Sir Lyon Playfair said: "No doubt other nations would gladly accede to the Conference proposed, in the hope of unloading themselves of their depreciated silver at our expense. Bi-metallists were alchemists upside down, they wished to transmute our gold into silver, and they would succeed if we went into a Silver League." Mr. Balfour spoke in favour of the motion: he asked the mono-metallists whether they did not regard with apprehension the fact that they were now at the mercy of

the legislation of the various silver-using countries. If America were to-morrow to decide to have nothing more to do with silver, and were to work its whole commercial system on a gold basis, where would prices be? He was of opinion that those who anticipated great commercial disaster from the establishment of a new system, exaggerated the dangers which had to be guarded against. Sir John Lubbock said the bi-metallists really asked that foreign debtors should be allowed to pay us in silver, if silver went down, and in gold, if gold went down. The resolution was rejected by 183 votes to 87.

On the 30th of April, the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill was again carried in the House of Commons by 222 to 155. On the 2nd of May, Dr. Cameron moved "that in the opinion of this House the Church of Scotland ought to be disestablished and disendowed." He was supported by Mr. Gladstone, who said he did not believe that there ever was a country where the question of Disestablishment was so simplified as it was in Scotland, or where, when it pleased Parliament to enact it, it could be introduced with less serious trouble. People talked about separating Disestablishment from Disendowment, but without Disendowment Disestablishment would be an absolute shadow. Lord Hartington said the declaration he made twelve years ago had been found most convenient, that he would be guided by the opinion of the majority of the Scotch people, and that when that opinion was arrived at, some means would be found of communicating it to the British Parliament. Those means had not been found, and it was still a matter of doubt whether the majority of the Scotch people were or were not in favour of the principle of Disestablishment. The test of the Election could not be satisfactory unless the votes were given to a considerable extent on this question. The resolution was defeated by 256 votes to 218; a narrow majority of 38, which was received with great cheers by the Liberals in the House.

A Bill to amend the Allotments Act of 1887 was read a

second time on the 24th of March, without a division. The object of the Bill was to supply some of the defects of the previous Act, by giving certain powers to the County Councils to hold an inquiry at the request of six persons, if the Sanitary Authority fails to provide allotments. On going into Committee Mr. Cobb moved an Instruction giving the Committee power to insert Clauses creating, by popular election, Local Authorities in smaller areas than those of the Sanitary Authorities, and to confer upon them larger powers for acquiring and managing land for the purposes of allotments, than those now vested in Sanitary Authorities under the Allotments Act of 1887. Mr. Ritchie said on behalf of the Government that to carry the Instruction would destroy the Bill. Mr. Stansfeld said it would be impossible to do any good with the Allotments Act until the machinery was simplified. Major Rasch said the state of affairs with regard to Allotments was so bad in Essex that he was strongly tempted to vote for Mr. Cobb's Instruction, but did not wish to wreck the Bill. Mr. Stephens, another Tory member, feared the Bill would be an even greater failure than the Act of 1887. Mr. Cobb's Instruction was rejected by 210 to 249, a narrow majority of only 39, 34 of whom were Dissident Liberals. On the 6th of May, Sir Walter Foster proposed that two persons instead of six might appeal to the County Council when allotments had been refused. This was rejected by 222 against 160. The Bill was passed without important amendment, and received the Royal Assent before the close of the Session. An important discussion was raised in the evening sitting of the 6th of May, on a motion by Mr. R. T. Reid, that a measure is urgently needed enabling Town and County Councils "to acquire by agreement or compulsion, on fair terms and by simple and inexpensive machinery, such land within or adjoining their several districts as may in their judgment be needed for the requirements of the inhabitants." Mr. Chaplin strongly objected to the principle of compulsion. Mr.



John Morley said such subjects as this would be more and more constantly brought before the House. The question of "unearned increment" would have to be faced before many years were over. It was unendurable that great increments which had not been earned by those to whom they accrued, but which had been formed by the industry of the community, should be absorbed by those who had contributed nothing to that increase. Mr. Reid's motion was defeated by 175 to 159, a narrow majority of sixteen.

On the next day the public agitation against the licensing proposals of the Government began. A joint address was issued, signed by Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Çaine, and Mr. John Wilson, the new member for Govan, on behalf of the Temperance organizations, pointing out that the proposal of the Government was to confer upon persons having any interest in licensed premises a vested right which they do not now possess, and which, if secured, would amount to a sum of at least £200,000,000 sterling. "The Government," said the Address, "have not ventured to make this proposal in a clear and definite form, but have covertly introduced it in the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise Duties) Bill. The measure provides for the purpose a sum amounting in all to £440,000 per annum, drawn from increased taxes on alcoholic liquors. This, however, is a mere pretext for easily obtaining legislative sanction to the principle of compensation—a principle which was rejected by the country two years ago with unparalleled manifestations of hostility—since not only is the proposed sum wholly insufficient for any adequate reduction in the number of licensed houses, but the measure applies only to 'on' licences, leaving 'off' licences of all kinds to be multiplied indefinitely." On the same day a deputation, which included the Duke of Westminster, Sir William Houldsworth, Sir W. Herschel, Mr. Stafford Howard, and other gentlemen, visited Mr. Ritchie and represented to him that the Church of England Temperance Society would support the Bill, but asked for certain amendments which Mr.

Ritchie promised at once. The other Temperance Societies all over the country roused themselves to uncompromising hostility. Memorials were sent by various religious bodies, and resolutions condemning the Compensation proposals were passed by public meetings and by all the Liberal Associations in the country. The Tory Local Taxation Committee stood almost alone in appealing, but appealing in vain, to County Councils and Chambers of Agriculture to support the Government measure.

On the 12th of May Mr. Ritchie moved the second reading of the Bill. He made much of the support of the Church of England Temperance Society, but confessed that he was much disappointed at the reception the Bill had met with from other Temperance Societies. The sole object of the Government, he said, was to help temperance reform. Mr. Caine moved "That this House declines to assent to a Bill which provides, by payment out of public moneys, for the extinction of annual licences in the manner provided by the said Bill." He said that while the Government offered sixpence to the Temperance party they gave a good round sovereign to the Liquor trade. As to the Church of England Temperance Society, the Government had the support only of one of its Committees. The principle of the Bill was that no public house licence should be extinguished without compensation, except for offences against the law. It was that principle that the Temperance party intended to resist to the bitter end. Mr. T. W. Russell said that he and Mr. Caine had fought on many a platform for the cause of temperance, but he was going to vote against his friend now, because he had not the slightest confidence in the member for Derby. Sir Edward Clarke, the Solicitor General, repeated his assurances of two years before, as to the right of licence holders to the yearly renewal of their licences. He said the case of Sharp and Wakefield did not bear on the question, and it remained a fact that the magistrates had no power to take away a man's licence simply because there were too many public-houses and

without any fault being found with the man himself. Mr. Bryce said the Bill was founded not on the desirability of a compassionate allowance but on the idea of a legal right to compensation, and that was a reason for opposing it. On the third day of the debate Mr. Gladstone spoke. He said that the Bill was one for Endowment rather than Compensation; in his belief, from the moment it received the sanction of the Legislature it would add and add largely to the value of every public house in the kingdom. As allusion had been made to West India compensation he would like to know what Parliament would have said if £20,000,000 had been placed in the hands of a public authority, to go round amongst the West India planters and emancipate such of the slaves as they could satisfy the proprietors they did not need. "That," said Mr. Gladstone, "is the plan now proposed, without principle to support it, without precedent to recommend it—founded, I have no doubt, upon the best intentions—but so framed that it will work to defeat those intentions, to paralyze every valuable provision that is embodied in the existing law, and to throw back the cause for perhaps an indefinite period, the progress of which we have observed and registered from day to day, and in the great future triumph of which we have an undoubting confidence." Sir William Harcourt spoke in the same sense. The Opposition, he said, meant to fight it out. They would offer to the Bill at every stage a most persistent and determined resistance. It would erect an insuperable barrier against temperance reform. Mr. Caine's amendment was rejected by 339 against 266, a Ministerial majority of 73, Lord Hartington, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Jesse Collings, and other Dissident Liberals voting with the Government.

While this discussion was going on there was an election for East Bristol, to fill the seat rendered vacant by the death of Mr. Handel Cossham. This excellent man, who had devoted his whole life to public affairs, and had been for half a generation esteemed in the West of England as a



philanthropist, a vigorous advocate of temperance, and an employer of labour who actively concerned himself in promoting the interests and the happiness of those whom he employed, had died suddenly on the 23rd of April. He had been present on the 22nd at three divisions, in which he had voted for Sunday Closing in Ireland. Next morning he appeared at the House of Commons at eleven and went to the library to write his letters. Here he was suddenly seized with illness and was taken away to the National Liberal Club, where he died in a couple of hours. He had been returned for East Bristol by a majority of 2,264 in 1885 and of 1,736 in 1886. The Ministerialists hoped that, as this majority was supposed to be largely due to the personal esteem in which Mr. Cossham was held, they might have the satisfaction of largely reducing it, or even of winning the seat at the by-election. They brought forward Mr. Inskip, who had fought their battle against Mr. Cossham in 1886, and was well known in the constituency. Mr. Wilson came forward as a Labour candidate, and it was feared might divide the Liberal poll. At the election on the ninth of May Sir Joseph Weston, the Liberal candidate, was returned by 4,475 votes to 1,900 for the Conservative, a majority of 2,875. The significance of this election was that, though the Labour candidate received 602 votes, the Liberal candidate polled 128 more than Mr. Cossham had received in 1885 before the Liberal division, while the Conservative received 36 less than in 1886 and 483 fewer than in 1885. On the 15th of May Mr. John Roche for East Galway and Mr. Henry Harrison for Mid Tipperary, and on the 25th and 30th of June Mr. Maguire in North Donegal and Mr. J. J. Dalton in West Donegal were returned unopposed.

The Bill for Sunday Closing in Ireland, for which Mr. Cossham gave his last votes in opposing an obstructive amendment of Mr. Baumann's, was read a second time on the day of Mr. Cossham's death by 242 against 78. In the Wednesday sitting on the 14th of May Dr. Fox carried

against the Government the second reading of a Bill for the provision of improved dwellings for agricultural labourers in Ireland. The Bill was afterwards defeated.

On the 16th of May Mr. Gladstone set out on a political campaign in the Eastern counties. It was perfect summer. Large crowds gathered at the Liverpool Street Station and at the stations on the way, reproducing in the Eastern counties similar scenes of enthusiastic welcome to those which had marked his visit to the West of England. In a speech at Ipswich he said, "You may observe that it is the practice of our opponents to go about the country and say, 'Do not suppose that the next dissolution is going to settle the Irish question, you will be very fortunate indeed if you settle it after the next dissolution but one.' They think, and they naturally think, that with the next dissolution but one I have very little to do either in prospect or in possible act. It is perfectly possible, I admit, that they may get rid of me, but I am not at all certain that they will be any better off for it." At Norwich there was a meeting of the Liberal Associations of East Anglia in the afternoon, and in the evening Mr. Gladstone spoke at a great meeting in the Agricultural Hall, in which he discussed the Irish question, and the present position and future prospects of business in the House of Commons, replying to the preposterous charges of obstruction made against the Liberal party by men ignorant of Parliamentary procedure. "The present majority," he said, "know that they have a fortress in the Septennial Act, they know that there may be a couple of Sessions more during which they may do as they like, with Parnell Commissions, Coercion Bills, Land Purchase Acts, and Public House Endowment Acts. Their intention is to make the most of their time. They understand the case. Though they do not speak out as plainly as we do, they are aware that power is in their hands, though that power is for a limited time, and they mean to make the most of it while it lasts." On the next day Mr. Gladstone went to Lowestoft where Mr. Judd, the

Liberal candidate, presented him with an address on behalf of the local Liberals, and Mr. Gladstone made a speech, returning home on Tuesday.

During Mr. Gladstone's absence the great fight on the compensation question began. On Monday night the Government had determined to force the Budget Bill through, with a result described by Sir William Harcourt the next evening in a speech at Bermondsey. "When we came down to the House of Commons yesterday afternoon," he said, "we knew what was going to happen. We had a very instructive indication. We found that supper had been ordered for the middle of the night for the Conservative Ministers, and we determined that it should be a sort of Belshazzar's feast. Well, at about one o'clock in the morning they began their proceedings, and they set to work to closure the debate. They determined to force through, at a time when everybody knew the matter could not be discussed, and if it were discussed it could not be reported, the clause in the Bill which raises the tax that is to provide the compensation. We resisted them in division after division. I am happy to say that the authorities of the House, through the Chairman of Committees, with that impartiality which characterizes Mr. Courtney, over and over again refused to closure the debate. Well, when we had gone on about three or four hours, at about four o'clock in the morning I got up and asked the Government whether they thought they had had enough, and how much longer they intended to proceed. I said that we were quite ready and determined to go on, and that if they disapproved of our conduct, if they thought that the country condemned us, let them appeal to the country. They did not care very much for what I said; they had got their majority, and their majority had got their supper. I suppose after supper some of them went to bed, because their majority sank by degrees as the night progressed, but after I made that appeal to them there got up a member of the House they were obliged to listen to.



Lord Hartington rose and he supported the appeal that I had made, and recommended the Government to desist from a course which was at once useless and in my opinion at least was disgraceful. Well, as you know, the Liberal Unionists have been called the crutches of the Government, but when one of the crutches rose up in judgment against them, why the Government toppled over at once and they had to retire; the whole plan of the closure was at an end, and we insisted that in the light of day and in the knowledge of the nation, this scheme of publican's compensation should be discussed. That is what happened last night. A very amusing thing occurred. *The Times* newspaper came out this morning, not knowing what had happened at four o'clock in the morning after it went to press, and it congratulated itself and the Government upon the grand success achieved." The struggle was continued day after day; the Government meeting the Opposition with a policy of closure and silence. The Bill was got through Committee on the 21st, and was read a third time on the 23rd by 141 to 67. The Public House Compensation policy had, however, only so far succeeded that the taxes to supply the money were enacted with a provision that the money should be appropriated as Parliament might direct "by any Act passed in the present Session." These last words were inserted on the suggestion of Mr. T. M. Healy. The Government were so determined to pass the Bill enabling publicans to be compensated, and so confident in their power to do so, that they accepted this proposal to ease the way of the Budget scheme.

The Whitsuntide holidays were full of the two great controversies of the day, Ireland and Public House Compensation. In Ireland, a meeting which was to be held at New Tipperary on Whit Sunday, was at the last moment "proclaimed" by the Government. New Tipperary grew out of the Ponsonby evictions. The landlord on the Ponsonby estate was coming to a settlement with his tenants, when a syndicate under the guidance of Mr. Smith Barry interfered,

and insisted that the evictions should go on. Mr. Smith Barry was owner of Tipperary, and his tenants resolved to come to the rescue of their Youghal countrymen by refusing to pay their rents. A large sum of money had been collected as a Tenants Defence Fund, and with a portion of this sum a temporary street was built outside the old town, to which many of Mr. Smith Barry's tenants transferred their goods. This too generous interference in the quarrel of their neighbours proved eventually to be beyond the strength of those who undertook it, and New Tipperary failed. This Whit Sunday gathering, however, was intended to evoke public sympathy with the tenants, and to encourage them in their struggle. A meeting was held at the railway junction, two miles from the town, and when it was over the people moved off in procession to Tipperary, where they were met by the police, who charged the crowd with their truncheons. No resistance was offered by the crowd who quickly dispersed, and Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien addressed the Tipperary tenants at a dinner in the school-rooms at night. In England, the temperance societies, and many of the political organizations, made use of the holidays to organize vigorous resistance to the Compensation scheme.

When the House resumed after the Whitsuntide holidays, Mr. Pickersgill raised a discussion on the interference of the police with public procession in London. There had been much complaint at the arrangements made for the working men's May Day demonstration, when the police arbitrarily fixed the route the procession should go. They had now interfered in the same way with a demonstration which was being organized against Publican's Compensation. The processions from various parts of London were to gather on the Embankment, and to proceed from thence to Hyde Park. The City Police had promised proper protection for the processions as they passed, but the Metropolitan Police had given notice that processions would be broken up if they attempted to go as processions through

the streets. Mr. Pickersgill asked that the course taken in 1888 should now be followed. Mr. Bradlaugh protested against the disposition shown by the Government of late years to destroy the right of public procession, and to impair the right of public meeting. Mr. Pickersgill's motion was defeated by 231 to 121. The Hyde Park demonstration was held in spite of police discouragement on Saturday, the 7th of June, and was in all respects imposing and successful, though there were many complaints of needless and irritating interference by the police with many of the local processions on their way. This experience of police government in London quickened interest in a protest of Mr. Dillon's in the House of Commons on the 9th of June, when he moved the adjournment, and raised a discussion which took up the greater part of the sitting. His protest against the violence of the police in Tipperary on Whit Sunday was supported by the whole strength of the Opposition, and on a division the Government majority was but 61—281 to 220. On the next day the battle over the Compensation clauses began again. Mr. Arthur Acland proposed that the money should be applied by the County Councils to Agricultural, Commercial, and Technical Instruction, but was defeated by 275 to 243, a narrow majority of only 32. A few days later Mr. Waddy moved that the Councils might use the money in relief of School Board rates and fees. This was rejected by 248 to 209. Meanwhile Lord Salisbury and Mr. Smith had met their supporters at the Carlton Club, to consult with them on the state of business. There was some grumbling, and Lord Salisbury's suggestion for carrying over Bills from one Session to another was not accepted with any unanimity. On the 17th of June Mr. Smith intimated in the House of Commons that all other measures would be postponed till the Licensing clauses of the Local Taxation Bill were got through. Two days later, the first clause of the Bill which assigned the revenue derived from the Beer and Spirit Duties for Publican's Compensation was carried by 228 to



224, a narrow majority of four votes. On the succeeding Saturday there was a great anti-compensation demonstration in Victoria Park, and others in some of the large towns, and on Monday Mr. W. H. Smith announced that the obnoxious clauses were withdrawn. So ended the second attempt of Lord Salisbury's Government to give the publicans and brewers a vested interest in their licenses. The time squandered on this abortive scheme wrecked all the business of the Session.

The mere withdrawal of clauses by which they had pledged themselves to stand was not the only defeat to which the Ministry exposed themselves in the great cause of Public House Compensation. They sought to cover their retreat by a proposal that nothing should yet be done with the money, but that the funds should be allowed to accumulate "until Parliament shall consider how to deal with the question." The practical result of this proposal would be, said Mr. Smith, "that the money will remain 'ear-marked' for the purpose of the extinction of licenses, under any general reform of the licensing laws to which Parliament may assent." Sir William Harcourt at once pointed out that if what Mr. Smith had called "ear-marking" was inscribed in a statute, and in a future Session or a future Parliament the House of Commons did not approve of applying the money for licenses, the money could not be applied to any other purpose without the approval of the House of Lords. On the next day Mr. T. M. Healy called the attention of the Speaker to the words he had inserted in the Budget Act, which was already law, by which the money raised by these duties was to be appropriated by an Act of the present Session. The Speaker held that it was a very grave question whether the proposal to accumulate the money was its "appropriation." He knew of no precedent for the accumulation, and intimated that Mr. Healy would "be justified in raising the matter as a question of policy or even of principle, both in Committee and also, if need be, on the third reading of the Bill." The

Government had therefore to make another retreat, and to abandon the whole scheme of Compensation. But in doing so they flung away the old odd ends stolen out of temperance schemes with which they had clothed the naked ugliness of Public House Endowment. The clause limiting the issue of new licenses had been inserted to give colour to the temperance professions with which the Compensation scheme was accompanied, and when they abandoned the one they dropped the other, and were allowed to do so by 157 to 128. In the end Mr. Arthur Acland's proposal, rejected in June, was adopted in August, and the County Councils were allowed to spend the money in providing Technical Instruction. A most mischievous scheme was thus transformed into one of unmixed good. A proposal of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman's to add Scotland's £50,000 of it to the £40,000 already set apart for Free Education, was defeated by 188 to 164.

A Police strike, and some rioting which accompanied it, some insubordination in the Grenadiers, which led to the placing of Colonel Maitland on half pay, and the sending of the regiment to Bermuda; a strike at the Post Office, and a debate on "shadowing" in Ireland, which one of their own supporters described as "damnable," were among the anxieties of the Government in July and August. The Standing Order for carrying measures over from one Session to another was proposed and was referred to a Committee. This Committee rejected a Report of Mr. Gladstone's against the scheme, and adopted one of Mr. Balfour's in its favour. Sir William Harcourt, in a brilliant speech at a dinner to Mr. Schnadhorst at the National Liberal Club, quoted a suppressed passage in Mr. Balfour's Report: "It would be competent, no doubt, for the House of Lords, if they chose, to suspend Bills which had not originated in that House." The House of Lords would therefore have been able to secure the initiation of all legislation. The Committee, however, on Sir William Harcourt's suggestion inserted a passage declaring that any claim or attempt by

either House on its own authority to postpone to a future Session a Bill which had come from the other House, would be a breach of constitutional usage. The Government dropped the scheme before the Committee reported. There was a discussion on the Bill sanctioning the cession of Heligoland to Germany, in return for which free gift Germany had given way on some points on which Lord Salisbury had unfortunately allowed British influence in Zanzibar to be compromised. The Tithe Bill and the Employers' Liability Bill were once more withdrawn; the Land Purchase Bill and the Bill for Private Bill Procedure in Scotland shared the same fate. Out of the wreck of the Session the Government contrived to pluck a few of their smaller measures which the Liberals had assisted them in passing. The Housing of the Working Classes Act consolidated and amended the Acts relating to Artisans' dwellings. The Police Act, out of which the quarrel with Mr. Munro arose, made provision for pensions to constables and allowances to their widows and children. The Western Australia Act created a new colony with a territory vaster than that of any of the other Australasian colonies. When the Census Bill was under discussion Baron Dimsdale revived the obnoxious proposal to require in the census returns particulars as to religious belief, but was defeated by 288 to 69. A Bill introduced in the Lords by Lord Meath to enable women to be elected and act on County Councils was supported by Lord Ripon, Lord Derby, and Lord Granville, but was opposed by the Government and rejected by 119 to 40. The Barracks Bill authorizing the expenditure of £4,100,000 was passed.

Parliament was prorogued on the 18th of August. The Queen's Speech recorded the agreement with Germany in Africa and the cession of Heligoland, the arrangements with France defining the frontier of the Royal Niger Company, the recognition of the French Protectorate over Madagascar and of the British Protectorate over Zanzibar, as well as the close of the Conference on the Slave Trade,



and the anxious attention the Government was giving to the difficulties in Newfoundland. Of the legislative results of the year there was very little to say. Of eleven principal measures mentioned in the Speech at the opening of the Session only two were referred to in the Speech which closed it.

There had been twelve by-elections, for seats which had been vacated by six Ministerialists and six Liberals, and the seats were held at the close of the Session by eight Liberals, and only four supporters of the Government. The most interest was felt in the triangular duel which was fought at Barrow. Mr. Caine resigned his seat as a protest against the Public House Compensation proposals of the Government. There was a Liberal candidate in the field, and the Conservatives started a candidate in special opposition to Mr. Caine as a revolted ally. Mr. Caine was half way back to rejoin his old friends, but only half way. The Liberals had not welcomed him, but the Tories had excommunicated him. He had a large personal following in Barrow, but he came out at the bottom of the poll, with Mr. Duncan, the Liberal, at the top. Mr. Caine afterwards completed his journey and rejoined the Liberal Party, which he had served well in happier times.

## CHAPTER XX.

*AN IRISH CATASTROPHE.*

THE autumn holiday which followed the most futile Session in modern times was a period of great discouragement to the Ministerial Party. *The Times* in commenting on the Session said, "The reproach of barrenness has been levelled at many recent Sessions, but in hardly any recorded case has it been as completely justified as in the present year." Early in the recess there were rumours of an impending famine in Ireland, and a letter from Sir Henry Roscoe was published in *The Daily News* calling attention to a report of Mr. Councillor Southern of Manchester, Chairman of the Connemara Industries Company, who had been making a journey in Carna and Connemara, and who stated that through the whole of that district the potatoes were seriously diseased, and that there was an immediate necessity for the storing of provisions against the coming need. These reports came in with increasing frequency during the early autumn, but no attention was paid to them. They were regarded by the Government and its organs as having a political motive. On the 14th of September, Mr. William O'Brien, speaking at the village of Schull in the western portion of County Cork, said that for tens of thousands of farmers it became a question this winter whether the landlords were to have rent or the people were to have food. He urged the tenants, "if they would not have a repetition of 'Black '47,' to meet together and consult how much rent they could honestly pay their landlord ; if they could pay any at all. They would then present a

united front and a united demand to the landlords, and would tell them that as the Government would do nothing for their relief they would throw the landlords on them for relief." Boards of Guardians and other local authorities passed resolutions calling attention to the growing distress. On the 18th of September, the evictions on the Ponsonby estate began, and on the same day Mr. William O'Brien and Mr. John Dillon were suddenly arrested on the charge of having, in speeches made at Tipperary between the 20th of March and the 10th of September, incited the tenants of Mr. Smith Barry not to pay rent. Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien were preparing for a journey to America to appeal for subscriptions for the evicted tenants. Evictions were going on at Glensharrold, at Luggacurran—the estate of the Marquis of Lansdowne—on the Ponsonby estate, and in other parts of Ireland. Mr. John Morley was in Ireland, whither he had gone to see for himself the condition of the people in the starving West. In the third week in September Mr. Morley visited the congested districts on the South Coast of Connemara. He travelled through the whole country, driving day after day on an outside car from village to village. His presence in Ireland alarmed the Coercionists in England. Here was no ordinary English traveller who could be "shadowed," or alarmed; but a trusted statesman, making note of scenes of violence and oppression, whose testimony the world would listen to and believe. "I have been criticized very much for taking the liberty of going to Ireland," said Mr. Morley in a speech at St. Helens after his return, "this seems to me rather a dog in the manger policy. The Chief Secretary will neither go to Ireland nor let other people go there. I do not play golf myself, and one must do something. I am accused of ignorance of Ireland. I do not pretend to be able to lessen that ignorance from the East Coast of Scotland. There are two Members of the Cabinet who are responsible for the Government of Ireland. One is on the East Coast of Scotland, I believe; another, the Lord Chancellor of



Ireland, is, I understand, at Boulogne, on the coast of France. I don't think that I was very guilty in preferring the West Coast of Ireland." His example was quickly followed by Mr. Courtney, and in the fourth week of September it was announced that Mr. Ritchie and Mr. Jackson were about to make a journey to Ireland in Mr. Morley's track. Meanwhile the arrests of Irish Members went on. Mr. Healy accounted for the arrests by saying that Mr. Balfour's English supporters complained that the reins of Government were being relaxed, and so between two games of golf Mr. Balfour signed the warrants to show that he was doing something. Lord Spencer, in a speech at Wakefield on the 24th of September, said that these arrests proved Mr. Balfour's policy to be a dismal failure. On the same evening Mr. Jackson told his constituents of his own visit to the famine districts, and expressed the hope that public works might be started which would prevent the horrors of famine.

The trial of Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien was begun in the Tipperary Court House on the 25th of September before Mr. Irwin and Mr. Shannon, Resident Magistrates who had been appointed to the magistracy from the police. Mr. Dillon was accompanied to Tipperary by Mr. John Morley, Mr. Alfred Illingworth and other English gentlemen with some ladies. On arriving at Tipperary there was a large crowd, and when some one called for cheers for Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien, the police were ordered to disperse them. They cheered again. "Draw your batons if this continues," said the officer at the head of the police. At this moment Mr. Morley arrived; one of the policemen raised his hand to strike him, and, but for the interference of Mr. John O'Connor, would have done so. Mr. O'Connor called for a cheer for Mr. John Morley, and his name at once paralyzed the police. Their policy is to knock Irishmen about, but as soon as the officer knew so distinguished an Englishman was present, he shouted to call his policemen back. In the speech at St. Helens already

mentioned, Mr. Morley gave his own account of these proceedings.

I arrived there with some of my political friends. We walked peacefully enough till we came to a certain cross road. I had not the slightest apprehension of there being any disturbance, until suddenly, to my amazement, I was hustled, pushed, and menaced by constables with uplifted arms and faces in a state of fury—in a state of to me most unaccountable agitation. The gathering of people was very scanty in the street, not anything worth the name of a crowd. I should have said there were a few knots of people at the street corners. There was no sort of obstruction. The nearest approach to riot and disorder was a shrill Tipperary cheer on my account. Yet this harmless cry seemed to excite the constabulary as if five thousand men had come tearing down upon them with shillelaghs from the four streets. I never saw—and I have seen plenty of riotous mobs in my life, Tory mobs and others—such an act of folly as the attitude of the authorities on that occasion. . . . The procession and the crowd [were as orderly as you are in this hall to-night. . . . The officer in charge at Tipperary on this occasion as I understand was a certain Colonel Caddell. This gentleman I was told, but did not hear it, said, “This is one of the most disorderly gatherings I have ever seen in my life,” and three or four English ladies who were in front of this “disorderly” gathering were so struck with the absurdity of this assertion that they could not refrain from laughing in his face.

Mr. Morley then described the violent efforts of the police to keep people out of the Court, in which Mr. Harrison, M.P., and several others were violently assaulted and injured. The Court was almost empty, and Mr. Morley advised Colonel Caddell to open the gates and let the people in. The advice was taken, and, said Mr. Morley, “when the gate was opened and everybody who liked went into the Court, even then the Court was not absolutely filled, and when they had got into the Court this tumultuous and terrible throng were quite as orderly as if they had been at church.” Mr. Morley added, “the resort to batons on that occasion under these circumstances was a wanton and unprovoked outrage.” “Who was responsible,” asked Mr. Morley, “for these scenes of unbridled violence, these scenes of blunder and indiscretion? I will tell you. What is responsible is the system

pursued by the Chief Secretary for three years and a half. It is the uniform persistency with which the Chief Secretary has defended every act of the executive authority in Ireland through thick and thin, right or wrong. From the odious and wicked slaughter at Mitchelstown downwards and onwards, the Chief Secretary has refused all effective public inquiry, he has denied the truth of all charges brought against the police, he has refused to believe the word of any Irish member, and the Irish people have been left wholly to the mercy of the authorities, without any supervision, without help, and without hope. We will see whether the Irish Minister will listen to English members across the table of the House." Early in October Colonel Caddell published his account of the proceedings at Tipperary, in which he said that the crowd not only cheered but groaned, and he believed the groaning was intended for himself. The Solicitor General absurdly said that Mr. Morley's presence was the cause of all the mischief. The President of the Board of Trade replied to Mr. Morley's account of the events at Tipperary by calling it "a traveller's tale," and Mr. E. Stanhope told some Tory rustics at Horncastle that it was an attempt on Mr. Morley's part to overawe a Court of Justice. Mr. Morley in a speech at Swindon on the seventh of October had no difficulty in turning these feeble excuses into infinite ridicule. Mr. Harrison charged the police with the unprovoked assault upon him at the Tipperary Courthouse. The charge was heard by a bench consisting of three magistrates and five "Removables"; and neither Mr. Harrison nor the other gentlemen concerned could get from a bench thus formed even a hearing of their case. Of the five "Removables" only one had been a lawyer, two had been officers of the army, and one a constabulary officer. The Chairman himself was an ex-officer of constabulary. These were the magistrates appointed to hear a charge in which the Irish Constabulary were concerned. On the tenth of October, when the Coercion Court met to



continue the trial of Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien, it was found that they had escaped to the United States.

Mr. Balfour had meanwhile been called back from his holiday to make a vigorous defence of himself and his Irish Administration at a great meeting at Newcastle-on-Tyne (October 18). He fell back upon the old lines of the exploded Campaign of Calumny and said, "The real people who are doing the work for the Gladstonian Parnellite party are the boycotters, the moonlighters, the mutilators, and the torturers of animals, the village tyrants, the village ruffians, and all the miscellaneous cohort of criminals, whom I am told by the representatives of the Irish people I should regard as the mouthpiece of Irish public opinion. Was ever such a humiliating confession made by any party? Behind this august show of honourable and right honourable members of Parliament, Privy Councillors, Ex-ministers, Ex-secretaries for Ireland, the criminal work of their party is being done by men who ought to be sent to the gallows, the prison, or the convict's cell, while they are to reap the political fruits of these base instruments." This is the spirit in which Mr. Balfour not only superintended from the midst of his distant golfing ground the Government of Ireland, but in which he conducted political controversy when he condescended to engage in it. It was by this kind of talk, supported and countenanced by the forged letters, that the Coercion Act had been carried. It was the kind of talk by which alone Mr. Balfour's coercive policy could be defended even before Tory audiences. As Pandulph says to Lewis in "King John"—

A sceptre snatched with an unruly hand  
Must be as boisterously maintained as gained,  
And he that stands upon a slippery place  
Makes nice of no vile hold to stay him up.

Mr. Balfour's speech was made to Mr. Morley's constituents, and to their keen satisfaction Mr. Morley promptly followed him on the next day but one with a

reply on the spot. Mr. Balfour, with his eye on the contest that was going on at Eccles, felt it necessary to continue the duel in the columns of *The Times*. A day later, the twenty-second of October, the triumph of Mr. Roby at Eccles showed that Mr. Balfour had lost the battle, and that his coercive system was doomed. The vacancy in the Eccles division of Lancashire was caused by the death of Mr. Egerton, the Conservative member, who had been returned by majorities of 247 in 1885, and 292 in 1886. Mr. Roby had now defeated Mr. Algernon Egerton by a majority of 205.

A day or two after this further defeat and rebuke, Mr. Balfour set out on a tour in the West of Ireland, somewhat similar to that which Mr. Morley had taken a month before. The distressed people were delighted at this evidence of aroused attention to their miseries. They received the Chief Secretary with the greatest possible courtesy and delight. Both he and they dropped all reference to political questions, and looked upon his tour as simply one of personal inspection by the Minister whose duty it was to suggest measures of relief. It was a proof that no people in the world more easily respond to kindness than the peasantry of the West of Ireland. They are benighted, ignorant, and miserably poor, but any expression of sympathy with them, any sign of willingness to help them in their struggles with hard landlords, a bad climate and an unfruitful soil, any sign of a determination to see justice done to them, is met with unbounded gratitude. Mr. Balfour's journey was undertaken somewhat late; he had been only moved to it, first by the protests of his political opponents, and next by the remonstrances of his political friends, but when he was aroused and did interfere he did it with thoroughness and success. An appeal which was made to raise a fund for the help of the people of the afflicted districts, produced a large sum, which was on the whole wisely distributed and effected very great good.

The Political controversy meanwhile filled the recess. Mr. Gladstone set out on the twentieth of October for another Mid Lothian campaign. He was approaching the end of his eighty-first year, and his energy in delivering four great speeches and making a week's campaign at such a period of the year, predisposed Scotsmen in his favour. His reception was if possible more cordial than ever, and the impression left by his speeches was such as greatly to alarm the Government and their friends. They had been told, and perhaps believed, that Conservatism or Dissident Liberalism was growing in Scotland, and they felt that a great effort must be made to counteract the effect of Mr. Gladstone's visit. So there was a flight of Ministerial authorities to Scotland. Sir M. Hicks-Beach went to Kilmarnock to reply to Mr. Gladstone. He was followed by Lord Hartington, who spoke in a despondent spirit of Dissident Liberal prospects. He had been much impressed by the Eccles election, and said that they must not shut their eyes to the lesson such reverses taught ; that the policy of the Unionist Party had appeared to the country to be too much that of the restoration of order, and that it was necessary they should now develop their remedial schemes. At the Guildhall, on the ninth of November, Lord Salisbury, after a reference to Foreign matters and a declaration against the Eight Hours Bill, turned to the by-elections, and gave his supporters a useful phrase by declining "the practise of political Meteorology." He plunged, however, into political astrology, and found mystical comfort in the facts, that General Boulanger had been very successful in by-elections in France but at a General Election was utterly defeated, that the Republican party in the United States had been equally unfortunate, and that M. Tricoupis had just been defeated in Greece by the very majority of two to one by which he had been certain he should win. In the middle of November Mr. Goschen went to Scotland to carry on the Ministerial effort to weaken the effect of Mr. Gladstone's speeches. He tried



to show how much the Government had done for Scotland, took great credit for Free Education, and said that his appeal was to "the balancing elector" whose vote would decide the General Election.

Not the most sanguine supporter of the Government could have dreamed in this period of depression and discouragement, of the new dawn of hope for their repressive policy which was close at hand. If Coercion was to be saved, it was by no means inappropriate that salvation should come from the Divorce Court. When the trial of Captain O'Shea's suit came on, it was found, to the confusion of his friends and the unbounded delight of his enemies, that Mr. Parnell had no defence to offer. He had been so indiscreet as to allow charges of connivance to be introduced into Mrs. O'Shea's defence, and thus gave the Solicitor General occasion to go into the whole case. Sir Edward Clarke made revelations as to Mr. Parnell's relations to his former friend and his friend's wife which were greatly derogatory to his character. To these statements, which turned a moral tragedy into a discreditable comedy, no reply was given. They were left before the public without explanation or denial. There is no need now to revive these charges against the dead. They resulted of course in a verdict dissolving the marriage and in a great outburst of political and social indignation. The Ministerial papers spoke of Mr. Parnell as having inflicted a fatal blow on his own influence and brought to an end his political career. It was natural that they should exult over the political suicide of a man whom they had tried to drive from public life, by unfair use of the weapons which unscrupulous forgery had put into their hands. The Liberal papers equally felt that Mr. Parnell had irretrievably fallen, and were only anxious to dissociate the Home Rule cause from a discredited leader. They assumed that Mr. Parnell would quickly announce his retirement from the Nationalist Leadership. "Political principles," said *The Daily News*, "and the parties that are formed on them and

vitalized by them are independent of the accidents of political Leadership. Even should a leader step aside there are others who will fill his place." The expectation that Mr. Parnell would thus step aside was generally entertained. The common belief was that he would take an early opportunity, if not of resigning his seat for a while, at least of resigning his Leadership. The Liberal leaders thought it due to him not to say anything which could have the appearance of hounding him from public life, but to wait in silence for the decisive action which they believed he was quite certain to take. This is the true and reasonable answer to the silly blame cast by some hotheaded persons on the Liberal leader for allowing a week to elapse before making any sign. But on the day after the verdict there happened to be a meeting in Dublin of the National League, at which speeches were made encouraging Mr. Parnell to hold on. On the twentieth there was a meeting in the Leinster Hall, when the Nationalist members—many of them with the simple desire of giving Mr. Parnell an opportunity for honourable retreat—passed resolutions in his favour. On the same day the National Liberal Federation held its gathering at Sheffield. Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Morley attended. It began as usual by Liberal meetings all over the district on the night before. Mr. Illingworth, speaking at one of these meetings, said, "Mr. Parnell must retire." Among the delegates at the Federation Conference this was the universal feeling. "Why does Mr. Parnell make no sign?" they asked. He had sent out the usual summons to his supporters preparatory to the meeting of Parliament, and his friends said: "Wait till the Session opens, and the Irish party meet to elect their Chairman"—the expectation being that he would then retire and ask his colleagues to elect some other Chairman in his place. The feeling in the Liberal party, however, was one of impatience at this delay. The subject was not publicly mentioned at Sheffield, but it was the universal topic of conversation among the delegates.

Their opinion was that the Home Rule campaign could not be carried on with Mr. Parnell in the Irish Leadership. On the day of the opening of the Parliamentary Session, *The Daily News*, expressing the feeling of the Liberal party, said that there was only one way out of the deadlock, and that was Mr. Parnell's retirement. Mr. Gladstone arrived in London on the afternoon of the twenty-fourth of November, the day before the Parliament reassembled. Mr. Morley has described, in reply to various charges, his efforts to place himself in communication with Mr. Parnell.

"The decree was pronounced on Monday, November 17th. From what had passed in our conversation of November 10th, I naturally expected daily to hear from Mr. Parnell. At last, on the Saturday (November 22nd), I wrote to Mr. Campbell desiring him to call on me as soon as possible. He came to my house on the Sunday evening. I begged him to be good enough to inform Mr. Parnell that Mr. Gladstone was coming to London on the following day (Monday, November 24th), and that it was most important that I should be able to communicate with Mr. Parnell not later than Tuesday forenoon, and before the meeting of the Irish party. On this last point I laid special stress. Mr. Campbell told me that Mr. Parnell was at Brighton; that he would go down the next day and deliver my request; and finally, that I might rely on hearing from him by eleven o'clock on Tuesday forenoon."

In the expectation that Mr. Parnell would be accessible before the meeting of the Irish party, Mr. Gladstone on Monday evening handed to Mr. Morley the memorable letter in which he expressed the opinion, also stated to Mr. Justin McCarthy, that "notwithstanding the splendid services rendered by Mr. Parnell to his country, his continuance at the present moment in the Leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland. I think I may be warranted," said Mr. Gladstone, "in asking you so far to explain the conclusion I have given above, as to add that the continuance which I speak of would not only place many hearty and effective friends of the Irish cause in a position of great embarrassment, but would render my retention of the Leadership of the Liberal party, based as it has been mainly



upon the prosecution of the Irish cause, almost a nullity." Mr. Gladstone's intention in writing this letter was that it or the substance of it should be communicated to Mr. Parnell before the meeting. Mr. McCarthy told Mr. Parnell what Mr. Gladstone's views were, but did not communicate them, as indeed he believed that he had not authority for doing, to the Irish party generally. Mr. McCarthy's view, like Mr. Gladstone's, was that Mr. Parnell would himself retire. Mr. Morley was not able to find Mr. Parnell. While awaiting the communication which had been promised he says, "At half-past eleven in the forenoon (November 25th) I received a telegram purporting to come from Mr. Campbell, saying that he was sorry he could not find 'his friend,' but hoped to see him at the House of Commons. I immediately applied to Mr. McCarthy, but he, too, was entirely in the dark; and so were two other members of the Irish party, then and now supposed to be much in Mr. Parnell's confidence. Before the hour at which the Irish party were to meet I went over to the House, but the Irish meeting, I rather think, had been accelerated—at any rate, it was over." Mr. Morley then had an interview with Mr. Parnell and read to him Mr. Gladstone's letter, but the Irish leader adhered to his resolution to hold the post to which he had just been re-elected. Later in the afternoon Mr. Parnell was informed that Mr. Gladstone thought it right to publish the letter to Mr. Morley. Mr. Parnell agreed that this was the natural thing to do, and in the course of the evening it was communicated to the press. The sensation was profound. The letter was received throughout the country with universal approval. On the twenty-sixth there was a full meeting of the Irish party in Committee Room number fifteen, with Mr. Parnell in the chair. This meeting was the first of a series. There was considerable discussion, during which Mr. Justin McCarthy, Mr. Sexton, and others expressed the opinion that in the changed circumstances Mr. Parnell's retirement had become inevitable, and

Colonel Nolan and others urged him to stick to his post. The meeting came to no decision, but adjourned till Monday, the first of December. On the twenty-ninth of November the morning papers published a manifesto of Mr. Parnell to the Irish people. This manifesto was wholly based on the idea that Mr. Gladstone's letter to Mr. Morley was the assertion of a claim by the Liberal leader to destroy the independence of the Irish Parliamentary party. This, he said, compelled him to put before the Irish people information which had hitherto been solely in his possession, and he said, "which will enable you to understand the measure of the loss with which you are threatened unless you consent to throw me to the English wolves now howling for my destruction." The manifesto then told of his interview with Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden in November 1889, giving an account of that interview, and also of an interview with Mr. John Morley at Brighton. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley contradicted his version peremptorily and at once.

The issue of this manifesto, which was an unscrupulous appeal to that suspicion of English statesmen which the coercive policy of so many years had naturally created in Ireland, convinced English Liberals of the absolute impossibility of working any more with Mr. Parnell on any terms. Nobody believed in the sincerity of the manifesto ; it was generally and rightly regarded as an outburst of petulance. It was equivalent to saying that if the Home Rule Party would not have Mr. Parnell they should not have Home Rule. It was a deliberate attempt to create a divergence of feeling between Irish Nationalists and English Liberals which would prevent them from working together. The great work of Mr. Parnell's public life had been the bringing into line of these two wings of the Home Rule army, and this manifesto was an attempt to put them asunder again. He preferred to wreck the work of his hands rather than give it over to be completed by another. His colleagues, however, were anxious to find some common ground between

themselves and him. He intimated that they might find this by getting an assurance from Mr. Gladstone as to the nature of his coming Home Rule measure. With this object a Committee was formed, who visited Mr. Gladstone and endeavoured to extract from him certain pledges which Mr. Parnell pretended were needful. Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues expressed their willingness to enter into communications at any time with any members of the Irish party, but in a letter on the 5th of December Mr. Gladstone reminded them that the question raised by the publication of his letter to Mr. Morley was a question of Leadership, that it was separate from and had no proper connection with the subject of Home Rule; and he told them, on behalf of his colleagues and himself, that he could not undertake to make any statement of their joint intentions on the questions submitted to them, or of any other provision of the Home Rule Bill, in connection with the question of the Leadership of the Irish party. There the negotiations with the Liberal leaders came to an end.

After six days debate, in which Mr. Parnell used his position in the Chair to prevent the party from coming to a vote, the majority, forty-five in number, led by Mr. McCarthy, withdrew from the room. The forty-five members at once adjourned to another room, elected Mr. Deasy to the Chair, and passed a resolution that Mr. Parnell's Chairmanship was terminated. They then elected Mr. Justin McCarthy as Sessional Chairman, with a committee of eight members, chosen by ballot, to exercise jointly with him the powers and functions of the Chairmanship. The minority re-elected Mr. Parnell. Seventy-three members of the party were present at these discussions, and in the division which took place there were forty-five against Mr. Parnell and twenty-eight who supported him. Of the twelve who were absent seven took the side of the majority, and five adhered to the minority, making the numbers fifty-two to thirty-three. One seat, that at Kilkenny, was vacant. Among the absent members who at once gave in their adhe-



sion to Mr. McCarthy and his friends were Mr. William O'Brien and Mr. Dillon, and their adhesion was a great source of strength to Mr. McCarthy and his friends. In the House of Commons itself the Leadership fell at once into the hands of Mr. McCarthy. On the succeeding Monday he gave notice of motion on the Tipperary prosecutions, and the whip of his party, Mr. Deasy, moved the issue of the writ for Kilkenny. Mr. Parnell, however, went off to Dublin, where he arrived early in the morning of the 10th of December. In the afternoon he went to the office of *United Ireland*, dismissed the editor, Mr. Bodkin, and broke up the type of the articles which were ready for the next number. In the evening there was a great meeting in the Rotunda, and Mr. Parnell made a vehement speech, in which he denounced the Liberal leaders—with the exception of Mr. Gladstone—and represented that the whole movement against him had arisen from his determination not to allow the Irish cause and the Irish people to be betrayed. At the same time the Irish Parliamentary party issued an address to the Irish people, giving the reasons why they had been obliged to put an end to Mr. Parnell's Leadership. In the course of this manifesto they said, "We do not believe that Mr. Gladstone attempted or desired to dictate to the Irish party. He recognizes our independence and respects it. He knows that we would submit to no dictation but that of duty. Mr. Gladstone, in his position, was bound to make known to all concerned the conclusion forced upon him that Mr. Parnell's Leadership would wreck the Home Rule cause, and having come to this conclusion, a man of eighty-one was entitled to say that he would rather retire than waste the brief remnant of his life in a struggle foredoomed to failure." This manifesto, which set forth the policy of the Nationalist party, was signed by Mr. Justin McCarthy as Chairman, and by forty-six Irish members. On the next day there was another struggle for *United Ireland*, which was eventually left in Mr. Parnell's hands. On the 12th of December a manifesto to the Irish people, throwing on Mr.

Parnell the blame of what they described as "the sudden and woeful eclipse of our cause," was issued by the Irish delegates in America, and was signed by Mr. John Dillon, Mr. William O'Brien, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, and Mr. T. P. Gill. Mr. Parnell replied by throwing himself into a political campaign in Ireland with an energy and industry which he had never exhibited before. He plunged with fiery zeal into the Kilkenny election, which both sides tacitly accepted as a test of the extent of their hold upon the Irish people. Sir John Pope Hennessy, who had originally been nominated by Mr. Parnell as the Nationalist candidate, had thrown in his lot with Mr. McCarthy and his friends. Mr. Parnell consequently brought forward Mr. Vincent Scully as his candidate, and a very close struggle was anticipated. Mr. Parnell appealed to the "Hillside men" and gathered together all the classes whose political influence he had before always deprecated and restrained. At one period of the contest he pretended to have received serious injury. It was said that lime had been thrown at him and that his eyesight was seriously in danger. For some days he went about with his eyes bandaged, but it was suddenly discovered that he discarded the bandage in private, and had received no injury whatever. The pretended lime was found to be flour. This histrionic attempt to enlist popular sympathy entirely failed in Ireland. In England, however, the Ministerialist papers made the most of it. As soon as it was seen that Mr. Parnell was doing his best to destroy the faith he had once preached, the Ministerialists discovered in him all the heroic virtues. During the struggle, Lord Salisbury made a speech at the village of Waterfoot, in Lord Hartington's constituency. "These Dublin agitators," he said, "at first backed Mr. Parnell; later on they back the Seventh Commandment." For himself, he advised those who in that sporting country had got bets on the question, to put their money on Mr. Parnell. Sir Edward Clarke suddenly discovered that "Mr. Parnell had been cleared by the Special Commission of

conduct which, if it had been proved, would have disentitled him to be accepted as an ally, and that no half-dozen men among his colleagues were equal to him. In the same way he was represented during the Kilkenny election as the great patriot, standing at bay, buffeted, persecuted, and even stoned by the crowd of little men to whom he alone had given importance and strength. As the Irish Bishops and priesthood had joined in the repudiation of a leader tainted with the grossest domestic treachery, it was represented that Mr. Parnell was only fighting the battle against priestly ascendancy in Irish politics. The election, however, though it showed the appreciation of the Irish people for Mr. Parnell's services and the power which still belonged to Mr. Parnell's name, ended in his complete overthrow. Sir John Pope Hennessy received 2,527 votes and Mr. Vincent Scully 1,365, a majority of 1,162.

While this contest was going on Mr. William O'Brien was on his way from America. The first result of the split over Mr. Parnell's Leadership was the complete frustration of the mission to carry out which Mr. Dillon and he had forfeited their bail. On the 30th of December, Mr. Parnell and Mr. McCarthy, with some other representatives on each side, met Mr. O'Brien at Boulogne. Mr. O'Brien's earnest wish was to bring about a settlement in the interest of the imperilled cause for which he had made great personal sacrifices. The negotiations with this object, kept up for several weeks, and Mr. O'Brien's unwillingness to admit their failure, caused them to be protracted till "the Boulogne negotiations" became the subject of ridicule. They were foredoomed to failure. Mr. Parnell was willing to make almost any concession which was compatible with the one condition that he should retain the Leadership. Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Dillon, Mr. William O'Brien, and their friends were prepared for any arrangements which would have smoothed the way for Mr. Parnell's retirement. That was the condition on which alone the Home Rule movement could be carried on. The English Liberal party



would not work with an Irish party led by Mr. Parnell. The majority of the Irish people were equally opposed to the association of their National cause with the revelations in the Divorce Court. Mr. Parnell, on the other hand, was equally determined that Ireland should continue to acknowledge him as leader, whatever might be the result to the Home Rule cause. In these circumstances no arrangement was possible, and the Boulogne negotiations consequently came to nothing. Mr. William O'Brien and Mr. Dillon returned to England on the 12th of February, when they were immediately arrested and sent to undergo the six months imprisonment to which they had been condemned in their absence. Two of his strongest opponents, men who had as much right as he to the allegiance of their countrymen, men who had laboured longer than he for the National cause and suffered for it more, were thus put out of Mr. Parnell's way.

On the 10th of March the majority of the Nationalist party held a meeting in Dublin, at which they formed a new political organization, to be called the National Alliance. On the 2nd of April there was an election in North Sligo, which was made another occasion for a great trial of strength between the two sections of the Irish party. Mr. Parnell's candidate, Alderman Dillon, had the support of the Conservatives, who not only voted for him but lent their carriages to bring up his voters. The Nationalist candidate, Alderman Collery, was nevertheless returned by 3,261 to 2,493 for his opponent, a Nationalist majority of 768. On the 17th of April Mr. Parnell issued a manifesto to the members of the Irish National League of Great Britain, in which he spoke of the desertion of raw recruits led by terrified captains, who were seeking to make the organization the instrument of English parties. This was now the constant burden of his appeals. He professed to stand for the independence of the Irish party. Sir William Harcourt speaking on the same day at Cirencester, said that Mr. Parnell had allied himself with the extreme party in Ireland,

the party of outrage, but happily the majority of the Irish people and the Irish representatives had refused to follow him in his violent and suicidal course. Lord Salisbury, speaking in Covent Garden Theatre at a Primrose League meeting, tried to make political capital out of Mr. Parnell's violence by saying that all which had now happened proved Mr. Parnell's close alliance with the most violent section of the Irish agitators, and that people now saw the seamy side of Irish heroism. Mr. Parnell was all this time exhibiting very remarkable energy. He was like a man who had suddenly awakened to the fact that he had missed or marred a great career. He saw the thanes fly from him with the scathing consciousness that if he was undone he had been his own undoing. He was haunted by—

the bitter memory

Of what he was, what is, and what must be.

And to some of those who knew him best he seemed at times to be almost bereft of his reason. Sunday after Sunday he made his appearance in some part of Ireland, attacking his opponents in the most violent language, and speaking of himself as the elected leader of the Irish people, whom the Irish people only could depose. But he made no way. Every month it was increasingly evident that the Irish people were not to be dragged into a fatal quarrel with the English Liberals at the heels even of their uncrowned king. Nor did the Coercionist Coalition, who were now patting him on the back, get any benefit from his quarrel with his party. The Liberals in the constituencies completely approved of the action of their leaders. The great triumphs at Stowmarket on the 5th of May, where a Tory majority of 543 in 1886 had been turned into a majority of 214 for Mr. Stern, the Liberal candidate, and in the Harborough division of Leicestershire on the 8th of May, where Mr. J. W. Logan had transformed a Tory majority of 1,138 in 1886 into a Liberal majority of 487, and the nearness of the result in South Dorsetshire on the day before, where a Tory majority of 991 had

been reduced by Mr. Pearce Edgumbe to 40, conclusively proved that Mr. Parnell's defection had in no way checked the flowing tide of Liberalism in the English constituencies.

Mr. Parnell was married to Mrs. O'Shea on the 25th of June, but the marriage, though it might have done something in the view of English people to atone for his moral delinquencies, had just the contrary effect in Ireland. On the 7th of July there was a contested election at Carlow, which was regarded as a Parnellite stronghold. Once more Mr. Parnell threw himself into the election with the energy of despair, but his candidate only polled 1,539 votes to 3,755 for Mr. Hammond, the Nationalist. This overwhelming defeat was almost destructive of the political influence Mr. Parnell had hitherto managed to retain. Even the Conservatives, who for six months had been putting their money on him in a political sense, felt that he was no longer of use. At the end of July Mr. Dillon and Mr. William O'Brien, who had completed their six months imprisonment, joined the movement against him in Ireland. At the end of August he was abandoned by *The Freeman's Journal*, the most influential daily paper in Ireland. But he still fought on, with unconquerable will "and courage never to submit or yield." But his physical energies broke down beneath the mental strain. Early in October he returned home after a great but discouraging campaign in Ireland, depressed and ill. He had received a severe chill which rapidly developed into rheumatic fever, and on the 6th of October he died. On the succeeding Sunday, the 11th of October, he had a public funeral in Dublin.



## CHAPTER XXI.

*"MUCH CRY AND LITTLE WOOL."*

No Session of the Coalition Parliament opened so auspiciously for the Government and its supporters as that which began on the 25th of November, 1890. The Queen's Speech recognized the existence of the scarcity in Ireland and expressed the hope that the measures of the Government would mitigate the evil. Bills were promised dealing with Tithes and with Private Bill Legislation for Scotland, while Free Education was foreshadowed in the round-about phrase "your attention will be invited to the expediency of alleviating the burden which the Law of Compulsory Education has in recent years imposed upon the poorer portion of my people." There was an intimation that time might not prove sufficient for the consideration of other questions; but if it should, measures were promised for Irish Local Government—"analogous to that which has been recently put in operation for Great Britain"—for District Councils, for Small Holdings, for Employers' Liability, for Public Health, for a Public Trustee, and "for increasing the security of Friendly Societies and Savings Banks." Business went on merrily enough. Before the end of the first week, the Address had been voted in both Houses, the Irish Land Bill and the Tithe Bill had been brought in, Mr. Smith had got possession of the whole time of the House up to Christmas, and Mr. Bradlaugh had moved a resolution objecting to "so much of the Treasury minute relating to perpetual pensions, hereditary payments and allowances, as proposes to commute some of such pensions, payments and allowances at the rate of practically twenty-seven years pur-

chase," which was defeated by 185 to 152. The first reading of the Irish Land Bill was met by a motion by Mr. Labouchere and Sir Wilfrid Lawson that it was undesirable to entertain any proposal to pledge the credit of the country for the purchase of land in Ireland till the assent of the constituencies had been obtained, and the motion was defeated by 268 to 117. The second reading was carried on the 3rd of December by 268 to 130, Mr. Parnell voting with the majority. On the motion for the second reading of the Tithe Bill on the 1st of December Mr. Stuart Rendel proposed "That no measure will be satisfactory to the people of Wales which does not recognize the fact that Tithes are national property, to be devoted to national purposes, and should be applied in accordance with the constitutionally expressed wishes of the people of the Principality." This was defeated by 224 to 130. On going into Committee on the 4th of December Mr. Francis Stevenson moved an instruction "that the Committee have power to provide for an equitable division of Tithe in accordance with the altered conditions of agriculture." This was defeated by 205 to 70. This long delayed measure passed very rapidly at last. When the Committee was resumed on the 21st of January, the President of the Board of Trade proposed as a proviso that nothing in the Act should impose any personal liability upon owners or occupiers for the payment of the Tithe rent-charge, and that nothing in the Act should give the Courts power to imprison for the non-payment of Tithe or of costs. A clause in the Bill empowered the Court to remit such portion of the tithe as was in excess of two-thirds of the annual value of the land. Mr. C. W. Gray proposed that the tithe should not exceed one-half the annual value, but was defeated by 178 to 124. The Act became law on the 26th of March.

On the 4th of December, Mr. Balfour brought in a Bill to provide seed potatoes for poor Irish tenants. This measure ran quickly through both Houses and became law within a week. A vote of £5,000 was also made for the

relief of Irish distress. In the House of Lords the Lord Chancellor brought in a Bill for the better protection of Infant Life. The autumn sittings were over within a fortnight, and on the 9th of December Parliament adjourned to the 22nd of January. The Ministers and their supporters were full of congratulations at the large amount of business which had been got through, while the Irish members were sitting in a kind of Irish Parliament in another part of the building. During the recess an election in the Bassetlaw division of Nottinghamshire, where there had been no contest in 1886 and a Conservative majority in 1885 of 295, gave some encouragement to the Conservatives. The ballot was on the 15th of December. Mr. John Mellor, who gallantly came forward to lead what he knew to be a forlorn hope, was defeated by 4,381 to 3,653, Sir Frederick Milner retaining the seat for the Conservatives by a majority of 728. This was the last election of the year. There had been twenty-three vacancies for seats which at the beginning of the year were filled by thirteen Liberals or Nationalists, and by ten Conservatives or Dissentients. At the close of the year these seats were held by sixteen Liberals or Nationalists, and by only seven Conservatives or Dissentients. There was thus a gain of three to the Liberal party on the contests of the year.

When the New Year opened, the exciting controversy over Mr. Parnell's deposition was at its height. The Irish quarrel had greatly raised the hopes of the Ministerialists, and some of the less responsible advisers of the Government thought that the moment was favourable for a dissolution and urged the Government to dissolve. But a vacancy in the representation of the Hartlepoons gave an immediate opportunity of testing the feeling of the Electorate, and the result came like a nipping frost to dissolution plans and hopes. Mr. Richardson, whose death vacated the seat, had been returned as a Liberal in 1885 by a majority of 1,040, and in 1886, when he had become a Dissident Liberal, by 912. The Liberal candidate was Mr. Furness, who was opposed by



Sir William Gray, the most popular Dissident Liberal in the constituency. The ballot took place on the 21st of January and resulted in another great Liberal victory. The poll was the largest ever made in the constituency; the Liberal candidate received 4,603 votes, the Dissident Liberal 4,305, a Liberal majority of 298. This was at once regarded by the Liberal party as proving that the quarrel between Mr. Parnell and the great majority of his supporters had not in any way weakened the Home Rule cause; it was taken by the Ministerialists as a sign that a dissolution would be premature. The first important political event of the year was the publication of a letter addressed by Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Furness during the election, in which, speaking of the Irish Nationalist quarrel, he said, "The Irish Parliamentary party has vindicated itself by putting an end to the Leadership of Mr. Parnell, and has left us prepared to pursue as heretofore the duty of denouncing the principle of unequal laws, and that odious system of Coercion, not for crime but for combination apart from crime, which has been adopted by the present Government and Parliament and made a portion of the permanent law of the land." On the 10th, Sir William Harcourt, in a letter to a correspondent, replied to rumours which were being spread by the Tory papers as to differences of opinion said to have arisen among the leaders of the Liberal party. Sir William Harcourt said, "The colleagues of Mr. Gladstone, including your humble servant, are acting as they have acted and will continue to act with complete confidence in their chief, and in cordial co-operation with him and with one another. The Unionist Coalition place their reliance on three hopes. (1) That Mr. Gladstone will soon die. (2) That he will immediately retire. (3) That his colleagues and his party are about to desert him. There are some silly people who believe these things, but they will be disappointed in all their expectations."

In a speech at Limerick on the 11th of January, Mr.

Parnell made some further statements as to communications between him and Mr. Gladstone on the future Home Rule Bill which had taken place during his visit to Hawarden in 1889. Mr. Parnell said, "I have always been almost appalled by the load of responsibility, and especially since the Hawarden communication, when it became evident to me that we were not even to get the provisions of the Bill of 1886." He contended that the Bill of 1886 was an unsatisfactory one, and that Mr. Gladstone's new scheme, as suggested to him during the visit in 1889, was much worse. In a speech to his constituents at Newcastle on the 13th of January, Mr. John Morley said he had the direct authority of Mr. Gladstone to say, after reading Mr. Parnell's speech, that not a single proposal was made at Hawarden to which assent was asked. "We are told," said Mr. Morley, "that what has happened has knocked to pieces the argument for Home Rule. . . . In my judgment, in this most painful and most embarrassing situation—a situation of which we Englishmen cannot gauge the pain and embarrassment—the Irish have shown well and not ill. They talk about what went on in Committee Room number fifteen. Well, there was better debating there than there is generally in the House of Commons. . . . I have heard wonder expressed whether I had come here to say that we were going to drop Home Rule. We Liberals have entered into a solemn engagement with Ireland, we have bound ourselves to take the very first opportunity—aye, and not only to take the first opportunity, but to do the very best we can to create and make that opportunity,—of once more pressing upon Parliament such a scheme for the better government of Ireland as we believe will be safe for the British Empire, will be just and wise for Ireland, and will be rightly calculated to secure the free assent both of England and of Ireland. Do they suppose when they come to us and talk of dropping Home Rule, that all that we have said during the last five years has been mere smoke in the air and foam upon the wave? No, gentlemen, we meant what we said, and I, for one,

believe that the Liberal party stand as firm as they ever did to the convictions, to the principles, and to the professions which have been growing and strengthening for five years in their hearts, their minds, and their consciences. This Home Rule is not 'a pious opinion,' it is a practical and opportune proposal. The majority of the Irish representatives, and thousands of Irishmen both in England and abroad, have embarked all their hopes and all their aspirations for their native land on our fidelity to our professions. They shall not be disappointed. All depends upon Ireland. It is for Irishmen to choose. If they are true to themselves we will never betray them. The hour may be dark and the signs perplexing, but it is the dark hour that tests the metal of which men are made. Let us watch, let us extenuate, let us hope. . . . When the obscuring smoke of the present strife in Ireland has rolled away, let Irishmen know that they will still see the beacon of friendship and sympathy burning clear on the English shore."

Parliament reassembled after the Christmas holiday on the twenty-second of January. It found the Liberal party in the highest possible spirits, and a corresponding depression in the ranks of their opponents. Mr. Gladstone had said that in his opinion the Hartlepool election was by far the most important since 1886. "All must see that the simple figures of the poll reduce to dust and ashes the declarations of Lord Salisbury, Sir Henry James, Mr. Goschen, and the Duke of Westminster on what they call recent events." On the day of reassembling, the Scottish Private Procedure Bill was again introduced, and on the next day Mr. Channing moved a resolution declaring "that the excessive hours of labour imposed on railway servants are a grave social injustice, and a constant source of danger to the men themselves and to the travelling public," and that "it is expedient that the Board of Trade should obtain powers by legislation to issue orders where necessary, directing Railway Companies to limit the hours of work of special classes of their servants, or to make such a reason-



able increase in any class of their servants as will obviate the necessity for over-time work." Mr. Channing quoted from the Board of Trade Returns statistics which showed that excessive hours of labour were a part of the system on twelve of the principal English and Welsh lines. The total number of railway servants was 55,278. In September, 1889, 33,179 of these worked over twelve hours a day. He gave numerous instances of excessive overwork. He showed from Major Marindin's report of an accident near Leeds in which thirty-five persons were injured, that the driver of the train had been on duty eighteen and a quarter hours. In an accident near Croydon, in which eighteen persons were injured, the driver of one of the trains had been on duty seventeen hours and a half, and in an accident at York, the driver had been on duty fifteen hours. The official returns showed that in the one month of September, 1889, there were no fewer than 70,000 cases in which railway servants had worked more than fifteen hours in the day. The motion was seconded by Mr. J. Wilson. Sir M. Hicks-Beach offered, if the motion were withdrawn, to propose that the question should be investigated by a Select Committee. Mr. Channing, however, went to a division, and was only defeated by 141 to 124. A few days later the President of the Board of Trade announced that the Committee would be at once appointed.

In addressing his constituents on the 24th, Lord Hartington said he believed the policy of Home Rule, which "the Gladstonians" were still compelled to drag about after them was a lifeless corpse which they might endeavour to dress up in the most attractive form, but which would be a drag upon their energies and their success till they had found some decent opportunity to give it burial. On Sunday, the 25th, Mr. Parnell spoke both at Clonmel and at Waterford. The result of the election in the Hartlepoons proved, he said, that his attitude in the present crisis had in no way imperilled the Home Rule cause. "For myself," he added, "I promise that whatever the issue of the present

struggle, whether it be a happy issue—and I am sure it will be a happy issue—or the reverse, I will do nothing to prevent the lasting and permanent reunion of all our forces, I will stop at no self-sacrifice consistent with my duty to you and the declarations which I have made to bring about that reunion of the Irish forces which appears to have been temporarily broken.”

Mr. Schnadhorst, in a speech at Walsall, expressed the opinion that recent events had caused no loss at all of Liberal strength. He contended that there was no place for a third party in English politics, and pointed out that the Dissident Liberals, who were ninety-four before the dissolution in 1886, were now reduced to sixty. Sir Charles Russell, speaking as the guest of the Surrey Liberals at the first County Political House dinner of the National Liberal Club, said Lord Hartington had discovered that there had been a sudden increase in the legislative work done by Parliament. The reason was that the Irish members were busy with their own business in Committee Room number fifteen. Well that was just what English Liberals had always been preaching. If Irish members did Irish business, English members would have time to get on with English business. Mr. Russell Lowell had told him just after the election of the President, who was supposed to owe his election to the support of Irishmen in America, that, meeting in London one of the opponents of the successful President, he asked him “Where are you going to spend your holiday?” He replied, “I guess I shall go to Ireland.” “To Ireland!” exclaimed Mr. Lowell, “why you have just been telling me of the ungrateful action of the Irish in America.” “Well,” said the American, “I guess Ireland is the only English speaking community where the Irish don’t rule.”

The 27th of January must be regarded as a notable day in the history of the Parliament, for on that day the House of Commons did an act of justice and reparation such as it had declined to do to Mr. Parnell and his

colleagues. Mr. Hunter moved on behalf of Mr. Bradlaugh to expunge from the Journals of the House the resolution passed on the 22nd of June, 1880, which refused Mr. Bradlaugh the right of taking the seat to which he had been duly elected, by declaring that he could neither swear nor affirm. Sir Edward Clarke had the ill grace to oppose the motion, which was supported by Mr. Gladstone, and accepted by Mr. W. H. Smith. Sir Walter Barttelot said the conduct of Mr. Bradlaugh in that House had been such that whatever their political opinions might be, they must admire his straightforward course and character. The resolution was carried *nemine contradicente*. Mr. Bradlaugh was never able to be informed that this act of reparation had been done. He was then in the last stages of his mortal illness, and he died on the 30th of January, in his fifty-eighth year. He had been prematurely worn out by the toil and privation of a most laborious life, by the many storms through which he had passed, and especially by the long struggle with the majority led by the late Sir Stafford Northcote in the Parliament of 1880. Mr. Bradlaugh had kept this struggle up with varying fortunes for five years, and it was most appropriate that he should have been allowed to take his seat without question on the first day of the meeting of the great Liberal Parliament of 1885.

On the 28th of January Mr. E. Robertson proposed the second reading of the Bill amending the Law of Conspiracy, by providing that no combination should be considered criminal unless it contemplated criminal objects, and limiting the offence of intimidation to acts which would justify the binding over of the person doing them to keep the peace. The Bill was supported by Sir William Harcourt, but was opposed by the Government, and rejected by 179 to 143. On the same day Mr. Goschen spoke at Leeds of the monetary crisis which had arisen out of the liquidation of the great house of Barings in November, and suggested the issue of one pound and of ten-shilling notes, which he thought would enable a larger reserve of gold to be kept by



the Bank of England. In the House of Commons a Select Committee on the London Water Supply was appointed, and a motion by Mr. Shaw Lefevre for Government arbitration in the disputes between Irish landlords and tenants which had come down from the years 1885, 1886, and 1887, was defeated by 213 to 152. A Bill of Mr. Gladstone's to remove the disabilities which prevent any Roman Catholic from holding the offices of Lord Chancellor of England, or Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, came on for second reading on the 4th of February. It was supported by Sir Henry James, but was opposed by the Government, and defeated by 256 to 223. On the 6th Mr. James Rowlands moved that the time had arrived to carry out the recommendations of the City Livery Companies Commission, so far as to provide for the abolition of the Livery Franchise. Many of the Companies, he said, were manufacturing votes by admitting persons to the Livery on payment. The motion was supported by Sir George Trevelyan, but defeated by 148 to 120. The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill was read a second time on the 11th by 202 to 155. It got into Committee on the 10th of June, when the first clause was carried by 182 to 99, but as no facilities could be had for its further consideration, it had to be once more withdrawn. On the 12th the Tithes Bill was read a third time by 250 to 161 and passed. On the next day Mr. Sydney Buxton moved a resolution for the insertion in future Government contracts, of clauses binding the contractors to pay the current rate of wages and to observe the customary hours. Mr. Plunket moved a resolution in nearly the same terms, which was adopted by the Government. The election at Northampton to fill the place of the late Mr. Bradlaugh took place on the 12th, and resulted in the return of Mr. M. P. Manfield by a majority of 1,713, the largest Liberal majority ever obtained in the borough. On the 16th the House of Commons once more backed up Mr. Balfour in his coercive policy in Ireland. Mr. John Morley moved "That the action of the Irish

Executive in connection with the Tipperary prosecutions is calculated to bring the administration of the law into contempt and violates the civil and constitutional rights of Irish citizens." The motion was rejected by 320 to 245, sixty-one Dissident Liberals voting with the majority. Sir Henry James had brought in a measure for amending the Factory and Workshops Act, especially providing for better sanitary arrangements, and security from fire, which was read a second time on the 18th of February, but was afterwards withdrawn. A week later Mr. Matthews brought in a Government Bill having the same object. This measure not only provided against some of the evils of the sweating system, and for more security to health and life, but limited the hours of women's labour to twelve a day, with an hour and a half for meals. Later in the Session much discussion arose on this Bill. Mr. Sydney Buxton proposed a clause forbidding any child under eleven to be employed in any factory or workshop, which was supported by Mr. Mundella, and carried by 202 to 186. A further proposal of Mr. Buxton's to raise the age for full time employment to fourteen years, was defeated by 189 to 164. A most interesting discussion arose on a proposal by Mr. Randell to extend the provisions of the Bill to women working in laundries. This clause was the occasion of a great gathering of laundresses and their friends in Hyde Park on the 14th of June, when some striking speeches were delivered and a resolution unanimously passed "That this mass meeting of laundresses and organized workpeople, having regard to the shockingly bad condition of a large number of laundries, the excessive hours of labour, and the exposure of women and girls to unfenced and dangerous machines, calls upon the House of Commons to include laundries under the Factories and Workshops Act." This meeting was a most significant sign of the times. It showed how rapidly the organization of the workers for self-help and self-defence is growing even among women. Mr. Randell's clause was opposed by the Govern-

ment and negatived by 99 to 90. The Factories and Workshops Bill was eventually passed. Mr. Pritchard Morgan's resolution for the disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales was moved on the 20th of February. Mr. Gladstone spoke in its favour, but it was rejected by 235 to 203, a narrow majority of 32. The Royal Commission to inquire into the relations between Employers and Employed was announced on the 24th of February. Mr. McCarthy complained that Mr. Davitt had not been put upon it. On the 27th an important discussion was raised by Mr. Provand, who moved "that the proportion of taxation which falls upon and is payable by land and its rental is insufficient and ought to be increased." Mr. Provand was supported by Mr. Gladstone, who said that the making of such a motion was after all the only way of keeping alive the protest which it is the duty of the Liberal party to make, upon the subject of the present distribution of the land. The time would come, he said, when such efforts would bear fruit, and an endeavour would be made to bring taxation as between property and labour, and as between real property and other property, into a state of as nearly as possible exact justice. The resolution was lost by 128 to 77. In a discussion on the question of Egypt, on the 29th of February, a pledge was given that no further advance should be made in the Soudan. On the 3rd of March Mr. Stansfeld moved a resolution for the amendment of the registration laws, establishing the principle of "one man one vote," reducing the term of qualification for voters to three months residence, and appointing superintendents of registration, to be responsible for the Register of voters in every constituency. The resolution was rejected by 291 to 189. On the 13th Professor Stuart moved that freeholders and owners of ground rents and values in the Metropolis ought to contribute a substantial share of local taxation. This was an important item in the London Liberal Programme ; it was defeated by the narrow majority of 149 to 123. On the day before, the House of



Commons had voted £55,831 for relief works which were being carried on by the Government to meet the distress in Ireland. On the 18th of March Mr. Bowen Rowlands carried the second reading of a Bill to enable owners and occupiers in Wales to have effectual control over the liquor traffic. This was a measure for the establishment of the Local Veto. It was read a second time by 185 to 179, but got no further. On the 8th a Bill providing a close time for Hares and Rabbits during the breeding season was read a second time by 124 to 63; and on the 28th Mr. John Ellis moved a resolution in favour of giving local authorities in England larger powers of controlling public-houses, of deciding days and hours in which they should be open, and of largely reducing their number. Mr. Fulton moved an amendment, raising the question of compensating publicans whose licenses were withdrawn. In spite of the defeat of the Government on their compensation proposals in 1888, and again in 1890, this amendment was adopted by 190 to 129. Mr. Ellis's motion, being thus rendered useless, was carried by 182 to 111. On a question which excites much interest among religious and philanthropic people, Sir Joseph Pease inflicted defeat on the Government. He moved on the 10th of April, "That the system by which the Indian Opium Revenue is raised is morally indefensible." This was carried by 160 to 129. Sir Robert Fowler moved to add to the resolution words to the effect that the House of Commons, feeling the pressure of taxation on the people of India, would take steps to reimburse the Indian Government the deficiency which the loss of the Opium Revenue would cause. The debate on this amendment was adjourned, and no opportunity was found for resuming it. Another defeat of the Government was incurred on a question which is of great interest and importance to Nonconformists in England, and especially to those in Wales. Mr. S. Evans moved the second reading of a measure to empower all religious bodies who had built places of worship on leasehold land to make it free-

hold. This was opposed by Mr. Matthews as an interference with the rights of property. The second reading, however, was carried by 218 to 110, but as the Government, in spite of this large majority, would give no further facilities for the discussion of the measure, it had to be dropped. An important discussion was raised by Mr. Arthur Acland, who moved "That no measure of local government for the rural districts of England and Wales will be satisfactory which does not provide for the reform of vestries and the establishment of parish councils, so as to secure to the inhabitants of country villages a reasonable share in the management of their own affairs." This was defeated by 175 to 142.

The Home Secretary introduced a Bill to amend the law relating to the keeping, selling, and conveyance of inflammable liquids. This measure was strongly opposed by the dealers in petroleum all over London, and the opposition became so vigorous that in the middle of April the Bill had to be withdrawn. Mr. Lea carried the second reading of a Bill for Sunday closing of public-houses all over Ireland, including earlier closing on Saturday nights. A motion for its rejection was defeated by 248 to 94, but there the measure was stopped. Mr. James Rowlands moved the second reading of his Leaseholders' Enfranchisement Bill on the 29th of April. It was opposed by the Government and defeated by 181 to 168. Mr. Powell carried a small measure enabling local authorities in towns to establish museums and gymnasiums, and to keep them up by rates not exceeding a halfpenny in the pound for each object.

The great measure of the year was that for Free Education. Mr. Goschen introduced his Budget on the 23rd of April. The receipts in the bygone year had exceeded the estimate by £1,879,000, whereas the expenditure had only been greater by £356,000. The estimate of Revenue for the current year on the basis of existing taxation was £90,430,000; the estimate of expenditure was £88,444,000. This left an estimated surplus of £1,986,000. He expected

that the whole of this sum would be swallowed up by expenditure to which the Government was already committed. To carry out the promise of Free Education given in the Queen's Speech would require £2,000,000 a year, but during the current year only one-half of this would be required, as Free Education could not come into operation until the 1st of September. When Mr. Goschen mentioned Free Education somebody on the Treasury Bench corrected him by ejaculating the word "assisted"; "Free, free," cried the Opposition. "Free," said Mr. Goschen. "I do not object to the word 'free.' We intend to deal with the subject in no niggard spirit, as the Committee will see when I tell them that the cost of that operation will absorb the £2,000,000 at my disposal." Free Education having disposed of a million of the surplus, Mr. Goschen devoted half a million to barrack construction, and £400,000 to the withdrawal of light gold. No change was made in taxation. Mr. Goschen's view of Free Education was more fully and frankly developed in a speech at St. James's Hall on the 29th of May, when he said—"If our opponents carry Free Education they will not carry the same Free Education as we should be prepared to give, because our opponents would use free schools for the purpose of destroying the voluntary schools. That is their main object. It is for that reason that I considered it true wisdom, and in the true interests of those who have the permanence of these schools at heart, that we should take this work in hand and in such a way that those schools may have the power and the right of surviving the attack that will be made on them in the future."

The Free Education Bill, for which the Budget had prepared the way, was introduced by Sir William Hart-Dyke on the 8th of June. The proposals of the Bill were to give a "fee grant" of ten shillings a year for each child over five and under fourteen. The age was eventually raised to fifteen; where the fees received during the year ending January, 1891, had not been more than ten shillings per



child, such schools were henceforward to be free ; where the fees had been more than ten shillings the future fees were only to amount to that excess. Mr. Bartley, the Tory member for North Islington, opposed the Bill, but was only supported in his opposition by ten votes to 318. Mr. Henry Fowler proposed that in districts where there is no school under public control all schools receiving the "fee grant" should have some local representation in their management. This was opposed by the Government and defeated by 267 to 166. Mr. Summers moved that no religious catechism or formulary distinctive of any denomination should be taught in any school receiving the "fee grant." This was rejected by 195 to 90. Various amendments proposed from the Liberal side were rejected by large majorities, the Dissident Liberals joining with the Conservatives in resisting Mr. Channing's amendment making all schools that receive the "fee grant" into free schools, Mr. Thomas Ellis's amendment limiting the grant in voluntary schools to the amount required beyond the existing subscriptions to make the schools free, and Mr. Lloyd George's amendment, excluding from the grant, schools in Wales and Monmouthshire which require their teachers to belong to any particular religious denomination. Mr. Cobb's proposal permitting school-rooms to be used for public meetings was rejected by 178 to 131. When the Bill came back from the Lords it was found that they had made several hostile amendments. One of these was in the clause empowering the Education Department to approve of the increase of fees, if sufficient and suitable free school accommodation has been provided. The Lords struck out the words "and suitable," and the Government accepted the mutilation by 110 against 86. Another of their amendments, providing for the grouping of schools, would have increased the Education Grant. It was therefore held to interfere with the privileges of the Commons and was struck out, the Lords afterwards passing a resolution to the effect that the Commons had claimed more than their rights.

The discussions in Committee on the Irish Land Bill were resumed on the 9th of April. On the report of the resolution ordering that the salaries of the Land Commissioners should be taken out of the Consolidated Fund, Mr. H. Fowler moved that they be taken from "moneys to be provided by Parliament." Mr. Fowler moved this amendment "on grounds of policy, of precedent, and of principle." These Land Commissioners have the administration of public money, and throughout the length and breadth of the Civil Service the policy of the Constitution is to impose effective control by placing the salaries of officials on the annual votes. The amendment was rejected by 180 to 142. Mr. Labouchere moved to omit the word "guaranteed" from the description of the stock to be created under the Bill. He was supported by Mr. Gladstone, on the ground that it would be a breach of faith with the country if they were now to proceed to pledge the credit of the British Exchequer to a great scheme of land purchase for Ireland. They had received a certain commission in 1886, to the terms of which commission they were bound rigidly to adhere. The amendment was rejected by 232 to 138. On a later day, Mr. John Morley moved that no guaranteed land stock should be issued in any county for the purchase of a holding, unless the making of such an advance should have been previously approved by a resolution of the County Council, to be created in this or the ensuing Session. This was defeated by 247 to 170. The Bill was under consideration in Committee for twenty-four sittings. It was eventually read a third time on the 15th of June, and was passed by the Lords, and received the Royal assent on the fifth of August.

Two or three great measures were passed which were not in any sense party or contentious Bills. One of these was the London Public Health Act, which consolidated and amended the sanitary Acts in their application to London. One small but important change in the law made by this Act was that it transferred the duty of keeping clean the

footways, from the occupier of the house to the local authority. It provided, too, that no new house shall be occupied until the sanitary authority has certified that it has a proper and sufficient water supply. Provisions as to drainage, as to offensive trades, as to the sanitary condition of bakehouses, the removal of house refuse, the prohibition of the sale of unfit food, the disinfection of houses in which infectious diseases have existed, and the prevention of persons suffering from such diseases from travelling in any public conveyance, or engaging in any occupation likely to spread the disease, are all included in the Bill, which may be regarded as one of the chief results of the Session. Sir Henry Roscoe carried a measure to enable local authorities to promote Technical Instruction. The Savings Banks Bill, the Merchandise Marks Bill, and the Bill amending the law as to the custody of children, were among the smaller successes of the Session.

One of the interesting events of the Session was the appearance at the bar of the House of Lords on the 23rd of April of Sir William Whiteway, the Prime Minister of Newfoundland, to plead on behalf of the colony against the Fisheries Bill then before Parliament. The object of the Bill was to enable the Home Government to compel the colony to observe the existing engagements with France. When the preliminary business had been done, Lord Dunraven read a petition from the Legislature of Newfoundland, praying to be heard against the Bill by one of the delegates sent to this country. He moved that Sir William Whiteway be heard at the bar. Lord Knutsford seconded, the Lord Chancellor put the motion, and having declared that the contents had it, said "Let the delegates be admitted." The delegates, were Sir William Whiteway, Mr. Emerson, Speaker of the House of Assembly; Mr. Harvey and Mr. Monroe, members of the Legislative Council, and Mr. A. B. Morine, member of the Assembly. Sir William Whiteway then delivered from a paper an address nearly an hour in length, which was



heard with the closest attention by a crowded House. The delegates then withdrew, and Lord Knutsford moved the adjournment of the second reading till the 27th, that time might be given for the consideration of the very able speech the House had just heard. This was carried. On the 27th the Bill was read a second time, and fixed for Committee eight days later, when Lord Kimberley pleaded for delay, but the Bill passed through Committee and was read a third time on the 11th of May. The delegates then petitioned to be heard by the Commons, but Mr. W. H. Smith announced that an arrangement had been come to and eventually the Bill was withdrawn. The arrangement was that a Bill providing for the observance of the engagements with France should be passed by the Legislature of Newfoundland. In a little less than a year after this agreement had been come to, the Newfoundland Assembly refused to pass the Bill carrying it out.

Another measure which arose out of an international difficulty was the Behring's Sea Seal Fisheries Bill, which gave the Government power to prohibit seal-fishing in the whole or in any part of Behring's Sea. Armed with this provision, said Lord Salisbury, the Government would be able to come to an agreement with the United States to prevent the hunting of seals in Behring's Sea during the ensuing season. The new treaty with Portugal, laid on the table of the House of Lords on the 11th of June, finally settled the dispute with that old ally. It ceded to Great Britain a strip of Manica land not before within our borders, and secured Portugal in the possession of fifty thousand square miles on the north of the Zambezi. On the 16th of June Sir William Harcourt called the attention of the House of Commons to the disaster at Manipur. The Government of India had justly roused public indignation by attempting to seize the most capable and energetic member of the ruling family at Manipur by an act of treachery. They had tried to carry out this policy with insufficient preparation, and a serious sacrifice

of valuable life was the result. Sir John Gorst, in defending the Government of India, made a remarkable speech. Speaking of the Senapati—the able man whom the Indian Government had desired to remove—Sir John Gorst said a man of that sort must be dealt with in one or two ways, he could be removed from the State altogether, or he could be used as an instrument for governing the people of the State. It was quite evident that Mr. Grimwood (the Resident who had been massacred in the struggle) desired to adopt the latter course ; that was a very generous policy, but it was also a risky policy, the success of which depended upon the Resident obtaining ascendancy over the Senapati. Governments had never employed a policy of that kind. They had always hated and discouraged independent and original talent, and had always loved and promoted docile and unpretending mediocrity. This was no new policy. It was as old as the days of Tarquinius Superbus, although in these modern times they did not cut off the heads of the tall poppies ; they took other and more merciful means of removing any person of dangerous political pre-eminence to a harmless condition. In his own time he had known numbers of cases of this kind. He remembered how, thirty years ago the British Government spent their blood and treasure in New Zealand to destroy the power of the Maori king, instead of governing the natives through him. He remembered how a few years ago they had destroyed the power of Cetewayo, as soon as he was no longer necessary as a counterpoise to the Transvaal. Then why did they expel Arabi from Egypt ? Because he was thought politically dangerous to the peace of the country. Why did they arrest Zebehr and intern him at Gibraltar ? They took him as an act of political necessity, and they would not permit him to exercise his influence in the Soudan, although General Gordon, their own agent, asked to have him there ; and the Government of India, in refusing to Mr. Grimwood the assistance of the Senapati to carry out his policy in

Manipur, acted exactly as we did in the case of Zebehr. Mr. Stanhope promised that the Government would review the whole of the transactions at Manipur and express an opinion upon them.

The Session was distinguished by the unusual amount of illness which prevailed in both Houses and the great number of deaths. On the last day of March the Liberal party received a serious blow in the death of Lord Granville. Lord Granville had been in public life for fifty years, having entered the House of Lords in 1836 and being made Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1840. In 1851 he had succeeded Lord Palmerston in the Foreign Office, and had again taken the same post in Mr. Gladstone's first and second administrations. In Mr. Gladstone's third administration he had been Colonial Secretary, and whether in office or in opposition he had led the small band of Liberals in the House of Lords and supported every Liberal measure inside and outside of Parliament with a geniality, a consistency and an argumentative power which made him a most important and valuable member of the Liberal party. From the second week in May Mr. Gladstone was absent from an attack of influenza, only appearing once in the House during the remainder of the Session. Mr. W. H. Smith was also disabled by the illness which unhappily proved fatal on the 6th of October. Mr. Smith had had a remarkable and totally unexpected success as leader of the House of Commons. During five stormy Parliamentary Sessions he had managed the business of the House with a good temper, quiet discretion, and an amiability of manner which had won the respect and esteem of all parties. He made no pretence to eloquence, had no great mastery of political questions, but he was possessed of a tact which hardly ever failed him. He was perhaps a little too much given to fall back upon the plea that he was only doing his duty, and the nickname of Old Morality, which was given him by some of his opponents, expressed with some fitness the tone and spirit in which he recom-



mended many obnoxious measures to the House. He had nothing of what Wordsworth calls

Choice word and measured phrase above the reach  
Of ordinary men.

But as a man of business he did the business of the nation in the simple straightforward spirit in which he had been accustomed to do his own. The Session closed on the 5th of August, and the Queen's Speech spoke of the Convention with Portugal, defining the boundaries of the two kingdoms in Eastern Africa, a similar agreement with the King of Italy in the North-East of Africa, the proposals for arbitration with the United States as to the Seal Fishery in Behring's Sea, and the postponement of the ratification of the North Sea convention for preventing the Sale of Spirits at Sea, and of the final Act of the Brussels Conference for the suppression of the Slave Trade. The Newfoundland difficulty was reported as still unsettled. The House of Commons was congratulated on "the mitigation of the burden which the law of compulsory education has imposed upon the poorer portion of my people," and reference was made to the chief Acts which had been passed during the Session.

Among the important Committees which sat and reported during the Session was one on the Water Supply of London. This Committee, to which three Bills were referred, was instructed to inquire into all matters connected with the nature, price, management, sources, and sufficiency of the water supply. In their Report they recommended that the London County Council should have power to inquire into the whole question, to promote Bills in Parliament constituting themselves the Water Authority for London, and to negotiate with the Water Companies to take over their undertakings. The Committee further recommended that if the Water Companies were not bought up, there should be a Parliamentary inquiry into their powers and obligations, and into the control now exercised over them

by public authorities. They advised also that before this inquiry the interests of all the consumers within the area of the present supply should be represented. Nothing was done with the Report during the Session. The Committee on the Irish Society and London Companies' Irish Estates reported that a *primâ facie* case exists for the proposition that inasmuch as the Courts have declared that public purposes are permanently attached to the lands preserved by the Irish Society, permanent public objects still follow the lands conveyed by the Irish Society to the Companies, and the proceeds of the sale of such lands. The conclusions established by the Royal Commission on the Companies, presided over by Lord Derby in 1882, 1883, and 1884, in respect of the endowments of the City Companies generally, appear to be entirely applicable to the portion of those endowments existing in Ireland. It would be unjust to exclude the Irish tenants of the Companies from the benefits of the policy of land purchase, but it is indefensible to allow the vendors by means of the Purchase Acts to divest themselves of all the great local responsibilities peculiarly attached to their Irish Estates. The Committee on Railway Servants Hours of Labour held numerous sittings and took much evidence, but were unable to conclude the inquiry, and suggested their own re-appointment in the coming year.

## CHAPTER XXII.

*"WITH BUSY HAMMERS CLOSING RIVETS UP."*

THE most important political event of the recess was the meeting of the National Liberal Federation on the first and second of October at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, when 2,500 delegates were present, representing 800 Liberal Associations. The Chairman, Dr. Spence Watson, struck the key-note of the whole meeting in his opening words. He began by hearty congratulations on Mr. Gladstone's complete restoration to health, and then said, "Last year we met at Sheffield under a heavy cloud. The affairs of Ireland, which are always uppermost in the minds of Liberals, were in a very critical state, and now, after eleven months, we can rejoice that the cloud has passed away, and that the Irish people and the Irish party have emphatically shown how admirably fitted they are to deal with one of the most serious crises that any people or party have had to deal with." Mr. John Morley, speaking of the state of the party last year, when the difficulty about Mr. Parnell arose, said, "But we had on board of our ship a captain whose heart never quailed, he is not a man to take in a hurry to the lifeboats, and though there were some who thought that our ship was a wreck, he resolved, and we resolved, and you have since resolved, that we were right to stand by what seemed a wreck, and we have been rewarded within twelve months by seeing the Liberal party, as I judge from you here, in a temper of confidence which has never been surpassed, and seeing that ship which some thought might be a wreck, rapidly approaching the haven to which we are steering." Mr. Morley then spoke of the Temperance



question, of the coming battle with the House of Lords, and of Disestablishment in Wales, and said that during the last five years there had been an immense ripening of great political questions. Sir Edward Grey, in proposing the Home Rule resolution, spoke of the threatened opposition of the House of Lords, but thought we might rely on its instinct of self-preservation. The House of Lords, he said, was like a rusty old musket hanging over the Tory chimney-piece—an old musket of which they might use the butt end as much as they pleased, but from which they never dare fire a full charge. Mr. T. E. Ellis moved a resolution declaring that the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England in Wales should be taken in the next Parliament, as soon as Irish Home Rule was attained. This was seconded by Major Evans Jones, and carried unanimously. On the motion of Mr. Bryce and Professor Stuart, the Conference unanimously affirmed the policy of putting the London County Council in full possession of all municipal powers. On the motion of Mr. Sydney Buxton, seconded by Mr. Fenwick, a resolution was passed expressing satisfaction at the adoption of Free Education, setting forth the defects of the new Act, and declaring “That no system of public elementary education can be regarded as satisfactory and final, unless it secures that every family shall have within reasonable reach a free school, and that all schools supported by public money shall be subject to public representative control.”

Mr. Gladstone gave striking evidence on the first day of the meetings of the complete recovery of his health and strength. Early in the morning he attended a Communion service in the chapel at Glenalmond College in Perthshire. He then laid the foundation stone of a new wing of the College, attended a luncheon given by the Warden, and afterwards spoke for thirty-five minutes at a crowded meeting in the hall. He then drove to Perth and took a special train to Newcastle, where he arrived and had a great popular reception late at night. On the next day he made

a speech in the Tyne Theatre at the meeting which brought the Conference of the Federation to an end. He spoke for an hour and twenty minutes with unfailing energy, taking up and enforcing the chief points of the Liberal policy which the Federation had defined. He said the foreign policy of the present administration had been well nigh the inverse and reverse of that of the administration of Lord Beaconsfield, and he should rejoice if before the day came for it to give up the ghost, it might be possible for Lord Salisbury to make an effort to relieve us from the burdensome and embarrassing occupation of Egypt. Wishing, like the Father of the Poets, that the Muses would give him ten mouths and ten tongues with which to speak, he dealt first with the question of Local Option, then with Disestablishment in Wales and Scotland. These subjects led on to what he called "a very big question and a very difficult question, the question of the House of Lords." Lord Salisbury, contemplating the possibility of a Liberal victory at the election, and the passing of a Home Rule Bill by the House of Commons, had told his friends that they might still rely upon the play of the other parts of the Constitution. That meant the House of Lords. The House of Lords tried that game in 1831, and threw out the Reform Bill, the consequence was it had to undergo most painful humiliation to purchase one year's delay. Again there was a great battle in 1860 and 1861 upon the paper duty. "I hope," said Mr. Gladstone, "nay, more, I believe that the House of Lords will not accept the deplorable suggestion thrown out to them by the Prime Minister. I believe that they will decline to let their position in the Constitution be put to so ruinous a purpose. But this I know well, that if they should be reduced to a purpose so unfortunate, they themselves will be the first to repent of it. They will raise up a question which takes precedence of every question, because upon that alone would depend whether this country was or was not a self-governing country, or whether, on the contrary, there was a power not upon the throne or behind

the throne, but between the throne and the people, that would stop altogether the action of the constitutional machine which has now been perfected, or been brought nearer to perfection, by the labour, the struggles, the patriotism, and the wisdom of many generations." Passing on to the order in which Liberal reforms should be taken, he placed Ireland first, then came the question of registration "on the principle upon which a man spends a little time in sharpening his razor before he shaves himself." Labour representation, the payment of election expenses out of public funds, the payment of labour members, the great questions that arise out of the condition of the rural population, land law reform, and the eight hours movement, Mr. Gladstone passed in rapid review. Of the Irish Local Government Bill he said, "It is to be introduced in consequence of what may fairly be called a death-bed repentance. For this is the sixth year of the Parliament. There was a pledge at the last General Election to have no Coercion. There was a pledge not to engage British credit for the purchase of Irish land, and there was a pledge to have Local Government in Ireland. They have spent the first five years in breaking two of their pledges, and in the sixth year, when *in articulo mortis*, they have a scheme for redeeming the third pledge." It was idle, Mr. Gladstone said, to talk of Local Government without control of the police. You might just as well talk of establishing a House of Commons and yet depriving it of the power to regulate the taxes. As to Irish crime, "When our opponents talk of crime in Ireland, you must understand that the word bears a totally different meaning to what the word means in England. They do not mean murders, robberies, arson, house-breaking and the like. They mean resistance to the payment of rent. That is their interpretation of the word crime." Mr. Gladstone then went through the statistics of crime and illegality in Ireland, pointed out that the friendly feeling of the Liberal party towards Ireland had worked powerfully on



the Irish people, and wound up his great speech by reference to the Liberal successes in the by-elections. "The verdicts that the constituencies have spoken are not only that which is sober, just, and true, but also they speak what every one will understand: they speak the inevitable. Upon these verdicts Ireland relies. You have watched the conduct of Ireland in the difficult circumstances of the last nine months, and that conduct, I do not hesitate to risk saying on your behalf, has evoked in every breast a responsive voice of sympathy, and an increased conviction that we may deal freely and yet deal prudently with our fellow-subjects beyond the Channel. Such is your conviction. On her side she reposes in full trust on the evidence of recent facts; she believes that when the opportunity arrives the general sense of the country will ratify the judgment that has already been given at nearly a hundred points of its surface; she believes that the entire people of Great Britain will, by a great and decisive majority, determine to meet and to dispose of those demands which are now made upon them, she believes, alike by their honour, by their interest, and by their duty before God and man."

The second sitting of the Council had been held earlier in the day. Sir George Trevelyan moved and Mr. Storey seconded a motion on registration and electoral reform. This motion demanded, as among the first efforts of a Liberal Government, the appointment of responsible registration officers, the reduction of the qualifying period to three months, the abolition of the disqualifications now attaching to removals, and one man one vote. The resolution further declared for shorter Parliaments, the placing on the rates of the expenses of Returning Officers at elections, the holding of all elections on one and the same day, and the recognition of the principle of the payment of members. Lord Ripon moved and Mr. R. W. Perks seconded a resolution declaring "that the condition of the rural population should receive the immediate

attention of Parliament." Three points were set forth as of primary importance. (A) The establishment of District and Parish Councils popularly elected. (B) The concession of compulsory powers to local authorities to acquire and hold land for allotments, small holdings, village halls, places of worship, labourers' dwellings, and other public purposes. (C) The reform of existing Allotment Acts by the removal of restrictions, by giving security of tenure, and the power to erect buildings and the right of full compensation for all improvements. The resolution was seconded by Sir Walter Foster and supported by Mr. R. W. Perks, Mr. F. S. Stevenson, Mr. J. Spencer Balfour, Mr. G. M. Ball, and the Reverend W. Tuckwell, and carried with enthusiasm. The last resolution was moved by Sir Wilfrid Lawson, again affirming the declarations of the Council in favour of "A thorough reform of the land laws, such as will secure—(a) The repeal of the laws of primogeniture and entail; (b) Freedom of sale and transfer; (c) The just taxation of land values and ground rents; (d) Compensation, to town and country tenants, for both disturbance and improvement, together with a simplified process for obtaining such compensation; (e) The enfranchisement of leaseholds; The direct popular veto on the liquor traffic; The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Established Church in Scotland; The equalization of the Death Duties upon real and personal property; The just division of rates between owner and occupier; The taxation of Mining Royalties; A 'Free Breakfast Table'; The extension of the Factory Acts; and The 'mending or ending' of the House of Lords."

The resolution was seconded by Mr. Craig and supported by Mr. H. Fowler and carried unanimously. The whole spirit and tone of the meetings at Newcastle showed the Liberals of England and Wales to be full of courage for the coming conflict. At no meeting ever held by the National Liberal Federation was the speaking more powerful or the enthusiasm greater. The near prospect of the General

Election revived the spirits of the Liberal host as the distant sight of the enemy cheers an army, after long and toilsome marches in pursuit. The decisive engagement could not now be long delayed, and every officer in the Liberal army and every private in the ranks felt to be ready whenever the signal came to do his duty. The Newcastle programme, as it has since been called, laid down the great lines of Liberal policy. On those lines the battle in the constituencies is to be fought, and the Liberal legislation of the coming Parliament is to be carried on.

The effect of this meeting was to fill the rest of the recess with "the din of preparation." About ten days later Mr. Chamberlain went on an autumn mission to South Wales. Speaking at Llanybyther, he expressed regret that since a former political visit to Wales circumstances had widely separated him, at all events for a time, from those who then cheered and welcomed him. Of the Newcastle programme he said it was absurd and impracticable, and therefore dishonest. It began by offering everything to everybody, and would end by giving nothing to anybody. One thing he ventured to predict. In six months from the Liberals attaining office we should find ourselves in those European complications which embarrassed and baffled Mr. Gladstone's last government. Every three years or so they would have to go to the nation to ask its approval of the messes they had made. Speaking again a week later at Sunderland, Mr. Chamberlain said, "If I could consider only the interests of the party to which I belong, I would wish nothing better than that Mr. Gladstone should have the majority for which he asks, and that he should be allowed once more to show what an awful mess he would make of our affairs." In the succeeding week, Mr. John Morley, speaking at the Manchester Reform Club, reminded the public that Mr. Chamberlain was himself Mr. Gladstone's colleague when what he now called "this awful mess" was made. He was just as responsible as Mr. Gladstone, perhaps more. Did he approve, or dis-



approve? If he approved, with what grace or consistency could he now make these charges? If he disapproved, why did he not resign? Mr. Chamberlain, on the contrary, joined Mr. Gladstone again in 1886. Was that step taken, asked Mr. Morley, in order to give Mr. Gladstone another chance of showing what an awful mess he could make of our affairs? "It comes to this," said Mr. Morley, "that a statesman may sit at the council table with men, he may share their common anxieties and their common responsibilities, he may arrive with them after their deliberations at a common conclusion as to what is the best thing to be done, and yet he is to be free years after, for some paltry purpose of the moment, to hold up those very colleagues with whom he has sat at the council table, for whose conclusions he is absolutely responsible, to hold them up on the ground of those very transactions to obloquy and to contempt. That is a hitting below the belt for which I will venture to say you won't find a parallel in the worst times of our political history."

The by-elections of the year began with the Liberal gain in the Hartlepoons, the increased Liberal poll at Northampton, and the great defeat of Mr. Parnell in North Sligo, which have been already mentioned. On the 21st of April there was an election in Mid Oxfordshire, where Mr. Maclean, who had been returned as a Liberal in 1885, had been returned without a contest in 1886 as a Dissident Liberal. The vacancy occurred when the Liberal candidate, Mr. G. R. Benson, was travelling in Spain, and he only arrived home a few days before the polling. He polled 3,760 to 4,448 for Mr. Morrell, the Conservative candidate, a Tory majority of 688. In the Whitehaven election on the 24th, Sir J. Bain, the Conservative candidate, polled 1,338 votes to 1,105 for Mr. H. G. Shee, the Liberal. Here a Conservative majority, which had been 211 in 1885 and 106 in 1886, was increased to 233. These two elections greatly encouraged the Conservatives, but they were followed up by the Liberal gain in the Stowmarket division of

Suffolk on the 5th of May, by the great reduction of the Tory poll in South Dorsetshire on the 7th of May, and by the great Liberal victory in the Harborough division of Leicestershire on the 8th of May, which have been already described. The expulsion of Captain Verney, who had won North Bucks from the Conservatives in October 1889 by a majority of 208, led to another contest, and the election of Mr. Leon by an increased Liberal majority of 381. On the 1st of June there was a still greater Liberal success at Paisley, where Mr. W. Dunn was returned by a majority of 1,338. In 1885 the Liberal majority had been 864, in 1886 it was 566. In West Derbyshire on the 2nd of June Mr. Victor Cavendish, son of Lord Edward Cavendish, whose death had vacated the seat, was returned unopposed. On the 24th of July there was an election at Wisbech caused by the retirement of Captain Selwyn who had been returned in 1886 as a Conservative by a majority of 1,087. Mr. Arthur Brand the Liberal candidate now won the seat by a majority of 260. The Walsall election is described elsewhere. In the election at Lewisham on the 26th of August Mr. John Penn, a Conservative, defeated Mr. G. S. Warmington, the Liberal candidate, by 1,693. The Tory majority had been 1,225 in 1885 and 2,151 in 1886. A by-election in south-east Manchester was going on during the meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Newcastle. Sir James Fergusson had succeeded Mr. Raikes as Postmaster-General, and thus vacated the seat which he had won in 1885 by a majority of 1,443 and in 1886 by 327. He now defeated Mr. C. P. Scott of *The Manchester Guardian* by only 150. On the next day Mr. Graham Murray kept a Conservative seat in Buteshire by a majority of 345; the Conservative majorities had been 284 in 1885 and 545 in 1886. In the Cambridge University Election on the 10th Professor Jebb was returned unopposed in place of the late Mr. Raikes. In the Strand, vacant by the death of Mr. W. H. Smith, his son Mr. Frederick Smith was returned by an overwhelming majority of 3,006 over

Dr. Gutteridge. At a second election at Kilkenny on the 29th of October, Mr. Patrick McDermott, the Nationalist candidate, was returned unopposed. The election to fill the vacancy at Cork caused by the death of Mr. Parnell was held on the 6th of November, when Mr. Martin Flavin defeated the Parnellite candidate by 1,512. But the most striking by-election of the year, and the one which probably exerted the greatest influence on public opinion, took place in the South Molton division of Devonshire on the 13th of November. Lord Lynton had been returned as a Liberal in 1885 by a majority of 2,001. In 1886 he had been returned as a Dissident Liberal by 1,689. Mr. George Lambert, the Liberal candidate, now defeated Mr. Charles Buller, the Dissident Liberal, by 4,222 to 3,010—a Liberal majority of 1,212. In North Leeds Mr. Jackson on becoming Chief Secretary for Ireland in Mr. Balfour's place was returned unopposed. In East Dorset Mr. Sturt kept a Conservative seat by a majority of 347 over Mr. Pascoe Glyn. In south-west Sussex Lord W. Gordon Lennox was returned unopposed on the 9th of December. In Mid Armagh on the 17th a Conservative succeeded a Conservative without opposition, and at Waterford, where a vacancy had been created by the death of Mr. Richard Power, the Parnellite whip, Mr. J. E. Redmond, the leader of the Parnellites, defeated Mr. Michael Davitt on the 23rd of December by a majority of 546.

On the 24th of November the National Union of Conservative Associations met at Birmingham. They were not in very high spirits, for the South Molton election had taken place in the week before. Sir Albert Rollit brought forward a motion urging the Government to legislate in the ensuing Session for the extension of Local Government and Technical Education in Ireland. Some of the speakers urged that the one thing Government had to do was to win back the affections of the rural voters. Lord Granby moved the previous question, which was carried by a narrow majority. At night Lord Salisbury spoke at a great meet-



ing in the Town Hall. "We are told," he said, "that Home Rule will only be accepted if it is sandwiched between this and that. I think the metaphor is hardly strong enough. You may have noticed that at the chemists they sell capsules made up in gelatine in which very nasty stuffs are enclosed. I believe you can take castor oil without noticing that it is castor oil if it is only put into one of those capsules. Now Mr. Schnadhorst and his friends have recognized that Home Rule will not be swallowed except in one of these capsules, and therefore they do their best to enclose it in it." Speaking of Free Trade and Protection, he said, Free Trade has been a most admirable and in the main a successful policy, but you must take it with its disadvantages, and one of its disadvantages is, that the less fertile districts in the country will no longer grow corn to profit. Nowhere in the world will you find any region that grows corn to profit without Protection, which is situated in the fifty-second degree of latitude. Passing on to speak of the representation question, Lord Salisbury said he had not examined the figures himself, but he was told that thirteen seats would be taken from Ireland if she were dealt with on the strict principle of numerical equality. The North of Scotland, the West of England and Wales, all have representation considerably in excess of their population. "Our difficulties," said Lord Salisbury, "if we have had any, have been in the sparse and more ignorant districts, and we shall not be sorry for any reconsideration of the representation which shall give their proper weight to the large centres of population. I would not mention Parish Councils. To District Councils we have already expressed our adhesion, and when the time of Parliament permits we shall be very willing to carry our plans out, but when you come to Parish Councils I wish to know what they are to do. Parishes are very strange and very unequal divisions of the country. You will find parishes very small and parishes very large. They have no duties as far as I know to perform, and when I am told 'You ought to give them Parish Councils in

order to make rural life more interesting than it is,' I really cannot admit that the object of representative institutions is to amuse the electors who send representatives to them. If among the many duties the modern state undertakes, the duty of amusing the rural population is to be included, I should rather recommend a circus or something of that kind. But I am quite certain if you attempt to amuse them by giving them Parish Councils you will not satisfy the demand you have raised. As far as I have had the opportunity of attending vestries, I am bound to say that amusement is not the feature to be remarked upon as that which is most prominent." Lord Salisbury then passed on to discuss the Liberal Unionist Alliance and the by-elections. "I am told," he said, "that there is a flowing tide in favour of the Liberals; well, I have been in many parts of the world and I have found that the flowing tide is always ended by an ebb. At what particular moment that ebb will take place is a question for conjecture which is only revealed to those who are learned in the movements of the moon." He then passed on to discuss the prospects of the Election, the Home Rule Bill, the House of Lords, of which he said, "Mr. Chamberlain, who was not born with any passion of attachment to the House of Lords, had said it could only be got rid of by a revolution, and," said Lord Salisbury, "you cannot have revolutions on limited liability. If you have a revolution to overthrow the House of Lords I have no doubt the House of Lords will go down like a nine-pin, but a great many other things will go down too." He concluded with a long discussion of the possible results of Home Rule. "Mr. Morley talks of the Irish spectre stalking down the House of Commons and taking the majority by the throat. He may be quite certain that if he has his way that Irish spectre will be as lively as ever, only his garments will be Orange and not Green. Mr. Gladstone's last address to us was a demand that if we did not recognize the justice of his claim, we should recognize that it was inevitable. With the greatest respect I fling the

adjective back in his face. 'The inevitable' is on our side and not on his. The course of the world's destiny is with us and not with him. We are moving with the stream ; he is battling hopelessly against it."

On the next day Birmingham saw another sight. There was a luncheon in the Town Hall when the Coalitionists of Birmingham entertained Lord Salisbury. After the chief guest had spoken Mr. Chamberlain rose to propose a toast. He evidently felt the irony of the situation. He began at once by defending his position. "It is not for a mean, personal or private question," he said, "that one can repudiate one's old leader." Mr. Chamberlain, however, not only repudiated his old leader but turned his back upon his old self. He had looked forward, he said, to reunion with his old friends. "But if I refer to that now," he added, "it is to say, that since then the gulf has widened and deepened ; now I neither look for nor desire reunion." Two days later Mr. John Morley attended a great meeting at Wolverhampton, in which he replied to the Birmingham speeches. He spoke with regret upon personal and private grounds of Mr. Chamberlain's formal and definite declaration that he had parted company with his old friends, his old colleagues, and his old party. "But," said Mr. Morley, "he cannot be a more active opponent than he has been for four years past." Speaking of Lord Salisbury's scornful reference to parish councils, Mr. Morley said : "Well, Lord Salisbury talked in that same way some thirty years ago. When he was opposing the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, the repeal of the paper duty, he said : 'Can it be maintained that a person of any education would learn anything worth knowing from a penny paper?'" On the succeeding Saturday Mr. Gladstone delivered an address at Port Sunlight, in the Wirral peninsula. Referring to the position of the Dissentient Liberals, he said : "Mists are being lifted and ambiguities are being cleared up, the true positions and the true tendencies of those who call themselves Liberal Unionists—with some ambiguity of language, because they are



neither Unionists nor Liberals, and whom we term not unkindly but with historic truth Dissident Liberals—are beginning to understand their own position. Hitherto they have declared that they retain in full an ardent Liberalism." Then referring only indirectly to Mr. Chamberlain, but speaking of a similar declaration of Lord Hartington's, Mr. Gladstone said: "I think you will understand it, and I think Rossendale will understand it, for the last rag, or pretext, or shadow of Liberalism that hung on Lord Hartington is now removed by his own frankness."

In the first week of December Sir William Harcourt, in addressing his constituents, replied to Mr. Chamberlain, whom he called "the Bazaine of Birmingham": "The reception of Mr. Chamberlain into the Tory Church was a fine stage effect; it was accompanied by all the solemnities which belonged to a rite of that description. There was the Confession, the Abjuration, and after that the Absolution. He had to cry *Peccavi; mea culpa, mea culpa!* The old doctrine of 'Ransom' was to be repented and atoned for. He humbled himself in dust and ashes for his old faith. . . . Mr. Chamberlain's melodramatic declaration that he did not desire reunion with the Liberal party was worthy of a minor theatre. The Liberal party may reply to him in the language of the simple and well-known ballad, "'Nobody asked you, sir," she said.' It is a long time since reunion has been possible for Mr. Chamberlain, however much he may have desired it. His account in the books of the Liberal party has long been closed, and written opposite to his name are the words, 'No effects.' . . . Mr. Chamberlain has ceased to be a mischievous Liberal and has become a harmless Tory." On the 4th of December a conference of Sussex Liberals was held at Eastbourne, Mr. Stansfeld in the chair. In the evening there was a great public meeting, at which the chair was taken by the veteran Lord Hampden, and Lord Herschell, Lord Ashburnham, and Captain Brand were among the speakers. Lord Hampden said his friends often asked him

how he became a Home Ruler. "Well, when the Dissolution of 1885 took place I said to myself, 'Now we shall know what the strength of the National party in Ireland is.' When the returns came in it appeared that the National party numbered something like eighty-five per cent. of the Irish representation. Then I said to myself, 'Surely these people cannot be refused what they desire, if their desires are reasonable;' and I contend that their desires are reasonable. The idea of the Empire being disintegrated by Home Rule being given to Ireland is a mere bogey, that five or six years ago frightened politicians with weak knees, but since then has been found to be 'all my eye.' In the following year there was another Dissolution, and the returns from Ireland were exactly the same; and believing the demands of the Irish people to be reasonable I in 1886 became a decided Home Ruler. I have never changed my mind on that point, and I do not know that I ever shall." On the ninth of December Lord Spencer presided over a dinner of the Eighty Club, in honour of Dr. Spence Watson, President of the National Liberal Federation, at which Mr. John Morley spoke. Lord Spencer asked about Mr. Balfour's promised Local Government Bill for Ireland. Mr. Balfour had said that the measure must only be introduced with a double dose of caution. "A double dose of caution," said Lord Spencer, "means timidity, and timidity means failure." Dr. Spence Watson spoke of the violence and virulence with which the Newcastle programme had been attacked, yet the only new things in it were, first, payment of members, and second, agricultural reform. Mr. John Morley said that the Newcastle programme "is one which binds up within its four corners the questions which, at this moment, are the most pressing and best calculated to satisfy those interests which it is our duty to meet and, if we can, to satisfy."

On the tenth of December a Conference of Agricultural Delegates was held in the Memorial Hall, which may be said to have given a new turn to English as apart from Irish

politics. Mr. John Morley, speaking at a great Liberal demonstration in Warwickshire, two days before the close of the Session, said: "I for one never pretended that it was enough to give the agricultural labourer a vote for a member of Parliament once in five or six years. That is not making a citizen of him. You must do far more. Giving him a vote for a County Councillor, sitting and working I know not how many miles off, once in three years—even that is not making a citizen of him. You must give him a share in affairs at his own door. What is needed is that you should create a public opinion in the English villages," and he had therefore spoken of Free Education, Allotments, Church and Schools, Poor Relief, and Parish Councils. Mr. J. R. Robinson saw the opportunity of doing a great service to the Liberal party and to the country by giving the public a word-picture of "Life in Our Villages" in the columns of *The Daily News*. He accordingly sent an able and experienced Special Correspondent on a journey of observation and inquiry into the rural districts, and a series of letters was published in *The Daily News* during the summer and autumn which attracted universal attention, and at once made the village problem one of the pressing anxieties of the time. These Letters, the first of which was published on the fourteenth of August, described the condition of the villages, the homes in which the people live, their amusements, their interests, their wages, the terms of their employment, their relation to the administration of the Poor Law, and their views about themselves and their needs. The Letters themselves, and a great correspondence which arose out of them, resulted in a vast addition to public knowledge on rural questions and to public interest in them. A general feeling grew up that the main issue in the coming General Election would have to be fought in the rural constituencies, and that rural reform in England and Wales occupied a similar position to that of Home Rule for Ireland, and of Disestablishment for Wales. Dr. Spence Watson's remark that one of the only fresh features



in the Newcastle programme was that of rural reform, indicated the new urgency which this question had assumed.

The Rural Reform Conference was called together by the leaders of the National Liberal Federation, in order to allow the representatives of the agricultural classes—the journeymen farmers, as Mr. George Ball has admirably called them—to speak for themselves. The attendance at the Conference was severely limited to men who were themselves agricultural labourers, or persons in direct and immediate contact with them. The object was to get together a kind of village Parliament, every member of which should be a village resident with personal, practical knowledge of village needs and of the feelings and desires of the rural population. The delegates were invited by Mr. Schnadhorst and Mr. Hudson and the General Purposes Committee of the Federation, not to listen to speeches from statesmen and politicians, but that they might themselves make speeches for statesmen and politicians to hear. Each delegate was supplied with a copy of the Report of the Committee of the National Liberal Federation on Rural Government, and the subjects on which their opinions were asked were clearly indicated. Dr. Spence Watson who took the chair at the Conference, and conducted it with striking decision and promptitude, insisted on short speeches, and speeches to the point. The result was that in the two sittings of the Conference 58 speeches were delivered by representatives of almost as many rural constituencies all over the country. With the exception of a formal announcement by Mr. Arthur Acland, only one of the speakers was a member of Parliament, Mr. Lambert, who had just been returned as what he called a Progressive farmer's candidate for the South Molton Division of Devonshire. The result of the Conference was to show the wide-spread sympathy which exists among the rural population with the reforms in village life and rural administration suggested in the Newcastle programme. On the next morning the delegates were invited to breakfast by the Committee of the

National Liberal Federation at the Holborn Restaurant, and they were addressed by Mr. Gladstone, who was passing through London on his way to Italy. It was an indication of the kind of men thus gathered together, that during the pause before Mr. Gladstone's arrival one of the delegates said: "In the few minutes that remain before the venerated and much-loved man who is to address us enters the room, I think we should express our feelings of thankfulness by singing 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.'" The whole assembly rose at once and sang the Doxology to the tune of the Old Hundredth with magnificent effect, impressively showing the strong and fervent religious sentiment of these representatives of rural Liberalism. When Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone appeared, they were received with a remarkable outburst of enthusiasm, and Mr. Gladstone, who thoroughly entered into the spirit of this unusual and unprecedented gathering, spoke for an hour on the great political and social problems which had brought the Conference together. The Tory papers had been busy in propagating alarming statements as to Mr. Gladstone's health. His appearance at the Conference breakfast at once put all these rumours, and the mean calculations based upon them, to utter rout and flight.

This Conference was in some respects a turning point in the political movements of the time. It produced a conviction among the supporters of the Government that something must be done to meet the wishes of the agricultural population. Mr. Chaplin thinking it quite lawful to learn from the enemy how to fight called together a rural Conference at Ely at the end of January, and found much the same feeling among the rural speakers as that which had got expression six weeks earlier at the Memorial Hall. In summing up the discussion he told the people that his colleague Mr. Ritchie had submitted a resolution to the House of Commons providing for the grouping of rural parishes under District Councils, and had further expressed the opinion that the vestry system must be reformed. Mr.

Chaplin himself thought that vestry meetings should be held at convenient hours and should elect their own chairmen. He sympathized with the complaint that the rents of allotments had been too high. With respect to Small Holdings he said the Government would bring in a measure on the subject in the ensuing Session. This promise was confirmed by Lord Salisbury in a speech at Exeter on the 2nd of February. Having spoken of Parish Councils, which he said would do no particular harm beyond raising the rates, he turned to the question of small holdings. "I am very anxious," he said, "to multiply small properties in this country. As far back as 1870 I expressed in the most earnest way my desire to promote that policy, and my belief in the advantages which it could confer upon the country. But understand what that advantage is. I don't think it will operate—at least not to a very great extent—in relieving the particular sufferings of which the poorer classes complain. On the contrary it pre-supposes a certain amount of money for a man to undertake a small holding. It need not be much, but it must be something. The advantage I believe it will confer is of a wholly different kind. It is a political advantage. I don't think that small holdings are the most economical way of cultivating the land, but there are other things that are more important than economy. I believe that a small proprietary constitutes the strongest bulwark against revolutionary change, the soundest support for Conservative feeling." The Prime Minister's reason for promoting a Small Holdings Bill is therefore, not that it will benefit the classes for whom it seems to be designed, but that it will turn to the advantage of the political party of which he is the leader.

The death of Sir Charles Forster had created a vacancy at Walsall; Sir Charles Forster had represented Walsall for many years, and his popularity there made it unlikely that any other candidate would poll as many votes as he. He had been returned by a majority of 1,677 in 1885, and had not been opposed in 1886. The candidates were, on the



Conservative side, Mr. Frank James, his old opponent in 1885, and Mr. Alderman Holden. At the ballot on the 12th of August, Mr. Holden received 4,899 votes, and Mr. James, 4,361. The Liberal majority of 1885 was thus greatly reduced, and the Conservatives saw in it very great encouragement. The death of the Duke of Devonshire on the 21st of December, at the age of eighty-three, put an end to the leadership of Lord Hartington in the House of Commons, and opened an entirely new chapter in the brief history of the party of which he was the head.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*THE LAST SESSION.*

THE New Year came up on the horizon without a trace of the cloud that was so soon to darken the sky. London Society was looking forward to a royal marriage and the brilliant festive season which would follow. Day after day long accounts were published of the preparations for the wedding, and of subscriptions for wedding gifts. On the eleventh of January the serious illness of the Duke of Clarence was announced in the newspapers, and side by side with the announcement, the full significance of which the country did not understand, was a letter from the Lord Mayor, appealing as a Welshman to his fellow countrymen of Wales and Monmouthshire, to subscribe to a Mansion House Fund to present to the Princess May a suitable wedding gift from all classes of the Welsh people. This was on Monday morning, and at ten minutes past nine on Thursday morning the young Prince died. Never since the gloomy morning in December 1861, when the death of Prince Albert was announced, had any event stirred so deeply the feelings of the nation. The sudden turning, as Capulet says, of wedding cheer to a sad burial feast, touched the imagination and moved the sympathy of all classes of the people. This universal feeling was fittingly acknowledged in a letter from the Queen to the nation, dated the 26th of January. "The sympathy of millions," said the Queen, "which has been so touchingly and visibly expressed, is deeply gratifying at such a time, and

I wish, both in my own name and that of my children, to express, from my heart, my warm gratitude to all." The Queen concluded with a prayer that she might have health and strength "to work on for the good and happiness of my dear Country and Empire while life lasts." The whole of the month of January was a time of sickness. The spread of the influenza greatly raised the average of deaths, and the unhealthiness of the season deepened the gloom which had suddenly settled down upon the year. Cardinal Manning died on the same day as Prince Victor, and at the end of the month Mr. Spurgeon's long illness ended.

There was but slight pause in the political controversy. On the first of January the new Duke of Devonshire issued his farewell address to the constituency of Rossendale. It was a dignified and appropriate conclusion of a political connection which, as the Duke said, had existed with some interruption between North Lancashire and himself for more than thirty-four years. It contained, however, an implied challenge. The Duke spoke of his return in 1886 as the approval, by a significant majority, of the course he had taken in severing himself from the majority of those with whom it had been his privilege to act; and he expressed his confidence that the constituency would continue to support the principles he had advocated. The contest for the vacant seat was taken on both sides as an indication of the probable result of the General Election. The Tories and Dissident Liberals succeeded, as they had at Hartlepool, in getting as their candidate the most popular and influential Dissident Liberal in the constituency. Sir Thomas Brooks, their champion, was in all respects, but the Irish question, as Liberal as Mr. J. H. Maden, the Liberal candidate, and down to the close of the poll on the 23rd of January the Ministerialists were confident of his return. Mr. Maden, however, polled 6,066 to Sir Thomas Brooks's 4,841, and this decisive majority of 1,225 convinced the most sanguine supporters of the Ministry that the General Election, whenever it might come, would result in



a great Liberal victory. Everybody asked, What will the Government do? Many of their supporters felt that they had waited too long, some urged them to wait still longer, to distinguish their seventh Session by a series of popular measures, and to appeal to the country in the autumn. Some of their counsellors reminded them that there was no legal necessity for a dissolution till 1893.

The session opened on the 9th of February. In some of its personal aspects the House of Commons had undergone a striking change. Of the four political parties in it only one had gathered under its old leadership. Mr. Balfour was in the place of Mr. W. H. Smith, Mr. Chamberlain had succeeded to Lord Hartington; and though Mr. Parnell had been deposed 14 months before, his death, during the recess, had removed one of the most marked figures of the Nationalist party. Mr. Gladstone alone, the oldest leader of them all, upon whose probable removal two of the parties had been reckoning, remained at the head of his troops. Mr. Balfour as the most prominent and the most militant of the Conservative leaders naturally succeeded to the post which there was nobody else to fill. Mr. Chamberlain had been unanimously elected to the leadership vacated by the Duke of Devonshire in his reluctant removal from the living portion of the Legislature. The shadow of these changes, and of the death of the Duke of Clarence lay heavily on both Houses of Parliament, while the defeat at Rossendale covered the Ministerialists with confusion and dismay. The Queen's Speech opened, of course, with references to the death of the Queen's grandson, which it spoke of as "this grievous affliction, this great calamity." A reference to the new Viceroy of Egypt, to the agreement with the United States as to the mode of arbitration in the Behring Sea dispute, and to the opening of Zanzibar as a free port, constituted the foreign part of the Speech. First in the domestic outline was a scheme "for applying to Ireland the general principles affecting Local Government which have already

been adopted in Great Britain." The omitted portion of the English Local Government Bill, a Small Holdings Bill, a Bill for "Assisted Education" in Ireland, Scottish and Irish Private Bill Procedure Bills; a Bill for improving the Legislative Councils of India; another for relieving Elementary Schools in England from Rates; and others for Church Discipline, for enabling prisoners to give evidence; for revising the Bank Act, and for dealing with Employers Liability, formed the outline of a long and busy Session.

In the Debate on the Address Sir William Harcourt, in the absence of Mr. Gladstone, made appropriate reference first to the death of the Duke of Clarence and next to the loss of Mr. W. H. Smith, of whom he said, "his invariable courtesy, his native good-humour, his singular tact, and his habitual good sense had made him loved and followed by his friends and respected by his opponents." After a hearty recognition of the claim of his successor to the place which he holds, Sir William Harcourt discussed the points in the Queen's Speech. With respect to the reference to the Bank of England, he said, "the Chancellor of the Exchequer has flown a good many kites on this subject and aired a good many projects, yet we have no responsible measure brought forward by the Government." With respect to Irish Local Government, Sir William Harcourt said: "We on this side of the House do not regard the question of Local Government as settling that of self-government for Ireland, we have always regarded them as two separate things." Turning to Lord Salisbury's speech at Exeter, he said, "the language of Lord Salisbury shows that the Government of this country is the Government of an Orange Lodge, the oath of Supremacy and Allegiance that ought to be tendered at this table is 'the glorious, pious and immortal memory,' and the new Chief Secretary ought to appear in this House sitting astride the great gun of Athlone. That is really the natural consequence of such language. It is because the Union is regarded by the

Unionists from this point of view that it is detested, and justly detested, by the people of Ireland." Mr. Balfour, who was greeted with loud cheers on his first appearance to take part in debate as the leader of the House, made a vigorous reply, in which he said that he had never suggested anything which could be turned into an attack on the Roman Catholic population of Ireland as such, nor did he believe that anything had ever fallen from the Prime Minister which was capable of a similar interpretation. On the next night the Debate was opened by Mr. Chamberlain, who made a vigorous attack upon his old friends. Speaking of his own plan for the Government of Ireland he said: "I published my plan, and I am bound to say it met with universal disapproval. It was ridiculed by my right hon. friend (Sir William Harcourt). It was scornfully repudiated by hon. gentlemen below the gangway, and it was not accepted by hon. gentlemen opposite. I confess I was discouraged. I relinquished my patent, I am proud to hand it over to my right honourable friend, but I appeal for reciprocity, and ask him to tell the House something about his plans." Mr. John Morley replied, "Mr. Chamberlain asks what we mean by Home Rule. In connection with this demand there is a very curious fact. He says, 'we want full knowledge.' Who wants full knowledge? Rossendale doesn't want full knowledge, Rossendale had such knowledge as justifies us, whatever else you may say about it in claiming that election as a triumph for Home Rule." On the last night of the debate, the 15th of February, Mr. Sexton moved an amendment in favour of Home Rule and declaring the manifest failure of the Land Purchase Act of 1891. The debate occupied the whole evening, and the amendment was defeated by 179 to 158—a narrow majority for the Government of 21. This narrow majority indicated one of Mr. Balfour's chief difficulties. The Conservative party were utterly discouraged, and for some weeks it appeared as though a defeat of the Government was inevitable.



On the 18th of February Mr. Balfour explained to the House of Commons his scheme of Local Government for Ireland in a speech not only without enthusiasm but without conviction. He began by saying "whether the Bill which it is now my duty to introduce is the most important of the legislative proposals which the Government have to make during the course of the present Session, I will not say, but undoubtedly it is a measure of great complexity in itself, and it has raised the largest amount of controversy in the country during the recess." As he went on with the exposition of the scheme he was met with derisive cheers from the Opposition. After proposing the Cumulative vote for the Irish County Councils, he said: "I do not think it the best, but I do think it is very easily worked and very easily understood. I think there are great advantages in doing a stupid thing which has been done before, instead of a wise thing which has not yet been done." This epigrammatic summary of Tory principles, this Conservatism in a nut-shell, was received with immense laughter all over the House. The next great point was, that on application of twenty ratepayers a judge of Assize might give leave to petition for the removal of a County Council on the ground that the Council had been guilty of persistent disobedience to the law, or of corruption, or of malversation, or of oppression. When the petition is presented, the judges on the rota of Election petitions are to try it like an Election petition, and if they find the Council guilty, they can remove its members and fill their places by persons duly appointed by the Lord Lieutenant. Every point in the exposition of this scheme was received with loud Opposition laughter, and at the end of it the ironical cheers almost prevented Mr. Balfour from proceeding. As to the rest of the exposition but little interest was felt. Mr. Balfour himself at the close of his speech said of the scheme that he did not think it nearly as important for the administration of justice, for example, as the Coercion Act, nor did he think it as good for ameliorating the condition

of society as the Railway Bill they had passed. Mr. John Morley replied that this was the first time any Minister in any country had prefaced the introduction of a Bill for extending Local Government by avowing his preference for a Coercion Act. Sir William Harcourt said: "I think our object ought to be to give the largest circulation to the Bill. I think we ought to have a cheap edition of it, that the Liberal Vans throughout the counties of England should be stocked with this Bill, that we should enable the illiterates of the rural districts who are not fit for Local Government, as we have been told so often, to form a true opinion of what the Government think County Government ought to be." Mr. Chamberlain made some defence of the Bill, and urged that before condemning it they should wait to see the text. It was read a first time without a division.

On the next day Mr. Lloyd George moved a resolution expressing regret that in face of the resolution of the House of Commons of the 8th of March, 1872, a County Court Judge had been appointed, in a district in which the Welsh language is generally spoken, who was unable to speak or understand that language. The amendment was rejected by 166 to 143, another small majority. Mr. Chaplin introduced the Small Holdings Bill on the 22nd of February. It empowers the Public Works Loan Commissioners to lend money to County Councils at three and one-eighth per cent. to enable them to acquire land for small holdings, the amount borrowed not in any one year to be more than a penny rate would cover. The land thus acquired is to be disposed of in small holdings of from one to fifty acres. The purchaser is to pay one-fourth of the value at once, one-fourth may be secured by a perpetual rent charge, and one-half is to be paid by instalments or terminable annuities. Small holdings may be let to labourers in quantities not exceeding ten acres, and with some exceptions no dwelling-house may be built on a holding of less than £25 annual value. The buildings are

to be constructed by the purchaser, but where the cost would seriously cripple him in the cultivation of his holding the local authority may provide them. Where landlord and tenant agree as to the sale of a holding, the County Council may advance three-fourths of the purchase money. In the debate on the second reading, Mr. Gladstone said it was necessary to give the County Council powers of compulsory purchase; the administration of the Act, moreover, should be entrusted to District or Parish Councils and there should be other tenure besides that of Purchase. The Bill was read a second time without a division on the 24th of March. On going into Committee Mr. Cobb moved an Instruction for the insertion of clauses creating Parish Councils. The motion was supported by Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Leon, Mr. Winterbotham, and Sir Walter Foster. It was opposed by Mr. Jesse Collings, and negatived by 178 to 151, a narrow majority of 27. From the Conservative side of the House an Instruction was moved by Mr. Stephens and seconded by Captain Bethell, enabling County Councils to delegate their powers under the Act to urban and sanitary authorities or rural vestries. This was supported by Mr. Gladstone and defeated by 174 to 151. In Committee the limitation to "the labouring population" was struck out on the suggestion of Mr. Jesse Collings. An amendment of Sir Walter Foster's introducing the principle of compulsion was supported by Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Chamberlain said the amendment would improve the Bill, but he would vote against it rather than endanger the passing of the measure. This speech of Mr. Chamberlain's brought up Mr. Gladstone, who to the delight of both sides of the House made a brilliant ironical reply contrasting Mr. Chamberlain's present position with his former faith. The amendment was defeated by 226 to 184. The Bill passed through Committee on the 16th of May, the only further important change being that on the proposal of Mr. Haldane, which Mr. Chaplin at first resisted and afterwards promised to



incorporate at a future stage, in the event of intestacy a small holding is to be distributed as personalty and not as realty.

The motion for the Disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales was proposed by Mr. Samuel Smith on the 23rd of February. It was supported by the Liberal party, strongly opposed by the Government, and defeated by 267 to 220. A Bill, introduced by Mr. Provand, to continue the Shop Hours Regulation Act and to limit the Employment of Women and Young Persons to 74 hours a week including meal times, was read a second time against the opposition of the Government by 175 to 152, and sent to a Select Committee. Mr. Herbert Gardner moved, on the 26th of February, a resolution that school-rooms in schools in receipt of Parliamentary grants should, under reasonable conditions, be at the disposal of the inhabitants of the district for public meetings. The motion was seconded by Mr. Arthur Acland and eventually accepted by the Government without modification. On the last day of February Mr. Stuart moved the second reading of a Bill promoted by the London County Council for the making of a tramway over Westminster Bridge and along a portion of the Embankment. A memorial in favour of the Bill had been signed by 62,000 ratepayers in South London. The Bill was opposed by Sir Algernon Borthwick and Mr. Kimber. Mr. Boulnois spoke against it as a member of the minority of the Council which he said, amid loud Tory cheers and laughter from the Liberals, would be turned into a majority on Saturday next. The Bill was carried by 160 to 158 and sent to a Select Committee, where an arrangement was come to by which the terminus of the tramway line is fixed at a point opposite the opening of the Horse Guards Avenue.

The chief political interest of the first two months of the year was concentrated on the Liberal campaign in London and the County Council Election. During nearly the whole of February and the first weeks in March great

meetings, arranged by the London Radical and Liberal Union, were held in all parts of London. These meetings were addressed by various leaders of the Liberal party and were everywhere characterized by the greatest possible local interest and enthusiasm. No such series of meetings had ever taken place in London before, and they gave distinct evidence of an immense awakening of Liberal feeling and activity. The elections for the new County Council probably added something to their interest. The first London County Council bitterly disappointed Tory expectations. During the three years it sat it was the constant subject of misrepresentation and attack in the Tory newspapers. *The Times*, in its summary of the year 1891, spoke of the School Board Election in November as having "resulted in the signal defeat of the 'Progressists,' who are still more numerous and more mischievous upon the London County Council, whence they may be expelled to much greater practical advantage at the approaching renewal of that perverse and disappointing body." This was the tone of all Ministerial references to the County Council Election. On the 24th of February Sir Henry James took the chair at a meeting of the reactionists in St. James's Hall. Representing a borough in which gas-works, water-works, burial-grounds, markets, and police are under the control of a comparatively new and highly successful municipal corporation, Sir Henry James nevertheless spoke of the proposals to put these things under municipal management in London as "a wild and vicious policy," and as imposing upon the Council duties which it would be incompetent to perform. The Tory Associations had been urged to make the contest a political one and to run candidates of their own, and the Liberal party took up the challenge. It was understood on both sides that the County Council Election,—though the constituency differs by the inclusion of women and the exclusion of lodgers,—was really a trial of strength between the two parties. The Tories were quite confident of their power to sweep the

Liberal majority out of the Council. They had even arranged beforehand that the Duke of Norfolk should be the chairman. At the elections on March the 5th they were smitten hip and thigh. Of the 118 members elected 83 belonged to the Liberals or Progressists, while only 35 were Tories, or, as they called themselves, Moderates. The Liberal majority of twenty in the old Council, which the Conservatives had been confident they should sweep away, was increased to forty-eight.

Up to this period in the Session Mr. Balfour's leadership had utterly disappointed the hopes of his supporters. He had no mastery of the methods of public business, and was not even diligent in his attendance at the House. In a discussion on the Scotch Local Taxation Grant, on the 25th of February, it was discovered after the greater portion of the evening had been spent, that the proposals contained in the Bill ought to have been introduced by way of Resolution in Committee. This was only a single instance of mismanagement. The Conservative party were entirely demoralized, first by the cumulative effect of defeats in the by-elections, especially the overwhelming defeat in Rossendale, and now by the evidence the London County Council election gave of Liberal awakening in London. They had become tired of "ever climbing up the climbing wave," and were anxious to have the work of the Session wound up, and the appeal to the country made as quickly as possible. Against this feeling the Ministry and their supporters, especially the Dissident Liberals, had to strive vigorously. Mr. Chamberlain, in a speech in Birmingham on the 19th of March, said: "If I were the leader of a majority in the House of Commons—of an unbroken majority of 70—if I had proposed to the House of Commons measures of the greatest importance in which I believed, and of whose urgency and wisdom I was convinced, I think if I were bothered by obstructives desiring to know when the Dissolution would take place, I should answer them 'the time is in your hands.' Help us to proceed with the business of



the country. We have our policy to complete ; we have put it before you : defeat our Bills if you can, if you cannot let us pass them. Until we have disposed of them by one or the other alternative we tell you we will exhaust the constitutional limits which are within our discretion." On the same evening Sir Richard Temple told a meeting of the Primrose League that the members of the majority were not insufficiently good heart to get the Irish Local Government Bill through Committee, but were thinking more of the coming appeal to their constituents than of the work at Westminster.

As the Session grew older Mr. Balfour's supporters rallied in greater strength, and he himself succeeded in getting more in touch with the House he had to lead. On the 22nd of March more than 400 members voted in a division on Mr. E. Robertson's motion calling for an Amendment of the Common Law doctrine of conspiracy. Mr. Robertson's Bill on the same subject had been thrown out last year by 179 to 143. The motion was now rejected by 226 to 180. The morning sitting on the 23rd was occupied with a discussion of the Eight Hours Bill for miners. The Bill was supported by Sir William Harcourt, and Sir Charles Russell, by Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Jesse Collings ; it was opposed by Mr. Burt and Mr. Fenwick, by Mr. John Morley, Sir Lyon Playfair, Mr. George Howell, and others, and was rejected by 272 to 160. Mr. Fenwick's motion for the payment of members was discussed on the 25th, Mr. Dalziel, the new member for Kirkcaldy Burghs, making an effective maiden speech in its support. The Resolution was opposed by Mr. Balfour, supported by Sir George Trevelyan and Mr. Roby, and rejected by 227 to 162. The India Councils Bill, promised in the Queen's Speech, was read a second time on the 28th of March. A protest by Dr. Cameron against the monopoly of the telephones by the Post Office raised a debate on the 29th, but was defeated by 205 to 147. A motion by Mr. Kilbride to enable Irish tenants under the Land Purchase Acts to compel the landlords to sell them their Holdings

was rejected by 177 to 86. On the 7th of April the House of Commons had one of those small personal proceedings in which its members have the delight of schoolboys. Mr. J. F. Buckley, Mr. W. B. Hawkins, and Mr. John Conaker were called to the Bar, and Mr. McClure was made to stand in his place in Parliament to listen to an admonition from the Speaker. As Directors of the Cambrian Railway Company they had committed a breach of privilege by dismissing from the employ of the Company Mr. John Hood, who had given evidence before the Railway Servants Hours of Labour Select Committee. After the Speaker had told them of the charge Mr. McClure apologized on their behalf, and Mr. Buckley expressed his concurrence with what Mr. McClure had said. They then withdrew, and there was a long debate as to what should be done with them. The Government proposed that they should be admonished. Mr. T. P. O'Connor proposed that they should be required to reinstate Mr. Hood. Sir George Trevelyan and Mr. Gladstone thought the admonition would be sufficient. Sir William Harcourt said that the result of the admonition would be that the Directors would redress the wrong they had done. Mr. Picton proposed to substitute the word "compensate" for "reinstate." On a division Mr. Picton's amendment was rejected by 245 to 189. Mr. O'Connor's was then rejected by 274 to 159, and the Government Resolution was carried by 349 to 70—a majority of 279. The Directors were then recalled, received a dignified admonition from the Speaker, and withdrew, the whole Parliamentary evening having been occupied with their case. A division on the Septennial Act took place on the 8th of April on a motion by Sir Walter Foster expressing the opinion that it should be repealed for the purpose of shortening the duration of future Parliaments. It was opposed by the Government and defeated by 188 to 142. All the Liberals present voted in the minority, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Henry James, and other Dissident Liberals voted in the majority.

Mr. Goschen opened his Budget on the 12th of April. The Revenue for the past year had been £90,995,000, which was £565,000 more than the Budget Estimate. The expenditure in the twelve months had been £89,928,000, which was £336,000 less than the estimate. The Estimate of Expenditure in the current year was £90,253,000; the estimated revenue was £90,477,000, leaving a balance of income over expenditure of £224,000, "a sufficient margin," said Mr. Goschen, "to make me think I am fortunate in not having to impose taxation, but unfortunate in not being able to make any remission of taxation." A small reduction in the fee for patents, and some re-adjustment of the duty on sparkling wine, were the only changes he made. Perhaps the best criticism on his statement was that of *The Speaker*, which said: "For nearly two hours on Monday the Chancellor of the Exchequer detained the House of Commons with the vain belief that he was going to tell them something. Then he admitted that he had nothing to tell them and they all went away."

On the reassembling of the House after the Easter holidays the Government accepted without a division an important motion of Sir Edward Birkbeck's, "that all coastguard stations on the sea coast, and all signal stations should be telegraphically and telephonically connected, and that a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into the desirability of connecting certain light vessels and rock lighthouses by cable with the main land." On the same evening a Bill of Mr. John Ellis for empowering non-conformists to get sites for their places of worship compulsorily was read a second time and referred to a Select Committee. On the 27th Sir Albert Rollit's Women's Suffrage Bill came on for discussion. It had been preceded by the publication of an important letter from Mr. Gladstone in opposition to the grant of the Parliamentary Suffrage to women at present. The Bill was opposed in debate by Mr. Samuel Smith, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Bryce, and Sir Henry



James, and supported by Mr. Woodall, Mr. Courtney, and Mr. Balfour; it was defeated by 175 to 152. On the next day Mr. Balfour appropriated the morning sittings on Tuesdays and Fridays for the business of the Government, and the motion by Dr. Clark in favour of Local Legislative Assemblies for England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales was rejected by 74 to 54.

On Sunday the first of May there was a very remarkable demonstration in Hyde Park in favour of a compulsory Eight Hours Working Day. In the Trade Union Congress in September a resolution in this sense had been passed by 232 to 163, though many influential members spoke and voted against it. The May Day gathering was one of the largest that has ever assembled in the Park, and the Resolutions were passed with great unanimity and enthusiasm. Another important meeting was that of the Liberal Agents on the second and third of May for private Conference in Westminster Town Hall. On the second day they were entertained at lunch by Mr. Arnold Morley, and were addressed by him in a stirring speech. He said they had met on an occasion that might be called a council of war. They had had the advantage of the vast experience of Mr. Schnadhorst, "that veteran in the science of political organization, that Moltke in the art of political warfare." Mr. Arnold Morley spoke in the most sanguine tone of the prospects of the Election, and the forward state of the Liberal preparations for the conflict. Sir William Harcourt said: "We are met together—you as experts of the Liberal party—on a sort of coroner's jury by anticipation, to make what I may be permitted to call an *ante mortem* inspection of the body of Her Majesty's Government. I do not think we shall have much difficulty in arriving at a verdict. We shall be able quickly to pronounce that after a turbulent youth they are expiring of senile decay." Sir William Harcourt discussed the prospects of the battle in a spirit of the utmost confidence, which was heartily reciprocated by his audience. Mr.

Schnadhorst, Mr. Cyril Flower, Mr. L. V. Harcourt, and Dr. Spence Watson then addressed the meeting, which broke up in the highest spirits. On the next day Mr. John Morley was entertained at dinner at the National Liberal Club by the London Liberal and Radical members and candidates. Mr. Morley said: "In every part of England it has been my fortune to visit within the last six or eight months—and it embraces nearly the whole of the South part of the island—the spirit is one of undaunted confidence that our party has never been more ready for the fight. . . . I do not see why we should not achieve the same crowning and triumphant victory that a united party achieved in 1880."

The unopposed return of Mr. Willox for the Everton division of Liverpool, and the decisive majority by which the Chertsey division of Surrey was held against the vigorous attack of Mr. L. J. Baker in March revived the hopes of the Ministerialists which Rossendale had almost destroyed. The absence of Liberal opposition to Mr. Chamberlain's son in East Worcestershire, or to Mr. Usborne at Chelmsford, and the repulse in the second week in May of the strong Liberal attack on North Hackney, aided in the recovery of Conservative confidence. Their failure in South Derbyshire in March, where Mr. Evans Broad had a Liberal majority of 1,200, and Mr. Dalziel's striking success at Kirkcaldy, already mentioned, were sounder foundations for Liberal hopes. The unopposed return of a Nationalist for North Wexford may be set against the absence of any Liberal or Nationalist candidate in the election for East Belfast. In May the election balance of the year was in favour of the Liberals.

The most striking speeches of the spring were two of Lord Salisbury's in which, with his usual indiscretion, he delighted his opponents and depressed his friends. Speaking on the sixth of May at the Primrose League meeting in Covent Garden Theatre, Lord Salisbury assumed that there would not only be a Liberal majority after the

General Election, but that it would succeed in carrying the Home Rule Bill. Proceeding on this assumption to discuss what Ulster might do, he said :—

“Has Ulster changed? Has that colony from this island which has for over two centuries maintained the cause of British unity, has that colony changed, changed in its views or relaxed in its dread of the revolution which is threatened? On the contrary the conviction of its danger appears to increase with every year, and I know no event more important, no symptom more menacing than the opinions which have been lately put forward by the Ulster leaders, apparently with deep sincerity and a full conviction of the responsibilities which they involve. . . . What the Ulster people have to dread is being placed under the despotism of their foes. Is there a worse fate to be given to any man?” He then discussed the doctrine of passive obedience, declared that Parliament has a right to govern the people of Ulster, but no right to sell them into slavery, and said we knew how the people of Ulster had met James II. when he stepped outside the limits of the Constitution. He then proceeded : “If a similar abuse of power, be it on the part of a Parliament or on the part of a king, should ever occur at any future time, I do not believe that the people of Ulster have lost their sturdy love of freedom, or their detestation of arbitrary power. But these things are decided not on ethical considerations, which are very difficult to apply to such questions ; they are usually decided by the consideration whether resistance is likely to succeed. And that is a consideration which has its interest for us too. Whether the Ulstermen choose to pit themselves against the rest of Ireland, whether if they do so they will succeed, is a matter for their consideration. But I cannot help seeing in the language of those who herald this approaching change a belief that the military forces of England will be employed to subject the people of Ulster to Dr. Walsh and his political friends. Political prophecy is always uncertain. Still, I think I may venture to prophesy that any attempt on the part of any Government to perpetrate such an outrage as this would rend society in two. But these are speculations. What a terrible picture is the fact that we have to open these questions at all ! What a terrible picture unfolds before us ! What a terrible division in an empire which has hitherto presented a united front to the world. You call it a message of peace to Ireland. It is a message of religious civil war. And we must look to our share in the matter and see how far we are responsible for that civil war being brought about.

If indeed this sinister prophecy should prove to be true,



history will have no difficulty in laying at Lord Salisbury's door the responsibility for it. This direct incitement to rebellion—this prophecy so likely to bring about its own fulfilment—was read with astonishment even by Lord Salisbury's friends. But on the 18th of May, in a speech at Hastings, he made a more astounding declaration. He ridiculed Free Trade and Free Traders, and practically invited the opinion of the country on the question whether it should not enter on a war of tariffs. Parodying a familiar epigram on the Balaclava charge, he said Free Trade was noble but not business. He admitted that the established, the orthodox fiscal policy of the country was not to be altered unless a large majority sanctioned the change. "But," said Lord Salisbury, "if I may aspire to fill the office of a counsellor of the public mind, and to ask you to form your own opinion without reference to traditions or to denunciations—not to care two straws whether you are orthodox or not, but to form your own opinions according to the dictates of common sense, I would impress upon you, that if you intend in this conflict of commercial treaties to hold your own, you must be prepared, if need be, to inflict upon the nations who injure you the penalty which is in your hands, of refusing them access to your markets. (A voice, "Common sense at last.") There is a reproach in that interruption, but I am bound to say I never said anything else." Then he remembered that it was of the United States there was most reason to complain, and that what we receive from them is raw material and food, the price of which would be raised against ourselves by a recurrence to Protection. So having flung his handful of incense on the fire which fiscal superstition still keeps burning before the Protectionist Baal, he turned with formal homage to Free Trade, and said he urged retaliatory duties on luxuries only. The speech, however, was universally regarded as a Protectionist utterance, and *The Birmingham Daily Post* threatened the Prime Minister with the break-up of the Coalition unless he kept his fiscal heresies to himself.

Mr. John Morley, speaking at Huddersfield on the 21st of May, asked whether in this mischievous suggestion of a war of reprisals, Lord Salisbury meant business or not. He was either deluding his audience or proposing to take some steps backward, back towards the Corn Law times.

In the interval between these two speeches of Lord Salisbury's, a meeting was held at Edinburgh to welcome Lord Rosebery back to political life. He had taken part in the election of the London County Council in March, and had consented to be Chairman for a time, but he had not made a political speech since Lady Rosebery's death in November 1890. He had been so long out of politics, he said, that he felt as though he had come back to a world which had grown old while he was slumbering. There was a new New Toryism, a New Liberalism, and a New Trade Unionism; and the new Liberalism put greater value than the old on foreign and colonial responsibilities. Of Lord Salisbury's Ulster speech he said that in his lifetime there had been no darker nor more sinister contribution to the history of Ireland. On the 18th of May Lord Spencer, in a speech at Richmond, said that the threatening tone of Lord Salisbury, which Lord Hartington and Sir Henry James had imitated, was intended to influence the General Election, but they had "called forth a vain and idle bogey which will not prevent the Liberal party from doing justice." In his speech on the second reading of the Local Government Bill on the 24th of May, Mr. Gladstone, quoting Lord Salisbury's political prophecy, said "This is the declaration of the Prime Minister, not a prophecy alone but a distinct encouragement to the few misguided men who might be capable of imbibing the dangerous doctrine of the Prime Minister—a distinct encouragement to them to resort to the unlawful use of arms against the constitutional authority of the country, and against its deliberate decision." Mr. Balfour, in his reply to Mr. Gladstone, repeated and adopted Lord Salisbury's words. "I find that Lord Salisbury advanced three propositions. The first proposition was

that it would be a gross act of public immorality to put Ulster under the heel of the rest of Ireland. With that proposition I beg to associate myself in the fullest manner. The second proposition was, that if an attempt was made to put Ulster under the heel of the rest of Ireland, Ulster might not improbably resist by force. That is a question of what is likely to occur. I think it likely to occur. But Lord Salisbury offered it, and I offer it, merely as our forecast of what is likely to happen. The third proposition of Lord Salisbury was, that if Ulster did resist and if an attempt was made to put down the resistance of Ulster by a British standing army, then, in Lord Salisbury's words, 'an outrage would be perpetrated which would rend Society in two.' With that proposition also, I associate myself." No politician regarded these alarms as real. They were stage "asides" to timid voters.

All this time dissolution was in the air, but the Government made no sign. Mr. Goschen pleased the Lancashire bimetallists, by making a balancing speech to a deputation which urged that this country should confer with other Powers, to promote an agreement for the unrestricted coinage of gold and silver "at a fixed ratio to be mutually agreed on." The Government, Mr. Goschen said, had just received President Harrison's invitation to an International Conference, and had determined to accept it. He added—"we hope that from that acceptance will result a solution which will meet, to some extent, the difficulties you have so eloquently put before us." The deputation went home delighted, to recover from the illusion after the election was over. On the same day, the 11th of May, Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour received a deputation which Mr. Gladstone, as a private member, had declined to see, to urge the adoption of some form of compulsory eight hours' day. The Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Treasury were sympathetic but firm, and held out no bait to catch votes. A month later Mr. Gladstone consented to see an eight hours' deputation and entered into an argument



with them which greatly discouraged the movement for a universal compulsory application of the eight hours' principle. The best preparations for the dissolution were those which were in progress for the holding of a great Convention in Ulster; and the quarrels of the divided Nationalists in Dublin. The dispute which began at the end of 1890, and went on through 1891, had already undone much of the work the Liberal party had done in the constituencies for the cause of Irish emancipation, and now another disputation arose. The amalgamation of *The Freeman's Journal* with *The National Press* led to some unseemly conflicts between prominent members of the Nationalist majority, which were dwelt upon and exaggerated by the Ministerial press, with great gain and service to the Ministerial cause. The event curiously illustrated the cumulative effect of a long series of small incidents which all tell in one direction. It was a paltry quarrel, but all England was looking on, and many were made to doubt.

The second reading of the Irish Local Government Bill was moved by Mr. Balfour on the 19th of May "by gesture" as Mr. Sexton said. It had been hung up for three months and was almost forgotten. The debate lasted four days, on the last of which, the morning sitting on the 24th of May, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Balfour made the speeches already described. The Bill was then read a second time by the unexpected majority of 92, twenty-nine of the Irish members not thinking it sufficiently important to bring them up to vote. The Bill was a move in political strategy and nothing more. Many Conservatives regarded it as a false move, but the largeness of the majority in its favour satisfied them and strengthened the Government. It was meant only as a sign and pledge to the Dissident Liberals in the constituencies, of what the Government might do to redeem the pledges of 1886, if its lease of power was renewed in 1893. At the evening sitting on the same day Dr. Cameron moved that the Scottish Established Church ought to be disestablished and

disendowed. The motion was supported by Mr Campbell-Bannerman, but was rejected by 265 to 209, a hostile majority of 56. Of the Scottish representatives 40 voted in favour of disestablishment and 22 against it. Of the twenty-two one-half were Tories and the other half Dissident Liberals.

The most striking division of the Session took place on the succeeding day, the 25th of May, when Mr. Stansfeld moved the second reading of his Bill for amending and simplifying the Registration of electors. This measure, which Mr. Stansfeld had taken in hand at the request of his colleagues on the front Opposition bench, and which embodied their views as to the minimum of reform the case required, reduced the period of residence from twelve months to three, ending with the 25th of June instead of the 15th of July; abolished the rate-paying and tax-paying requirements; made "successive occupation" apply to different electoral areas instead of requiring it to be in the same constituency; enabled a revising barrister to alter the qualification for a fresh claim; provided that there should be a registration superintendent in every county and borough, with an assistant in each parish with more than five hundred population; and greatly simplified the lodger franchise. The Government did not approve the Bill, but did not oppose it. Mr. Balfour thought the qualifying period of residence too short, and could not go the length of the proposal in the Bill. Mr. Baumann, who moved its rejection, said it was universal suffrage qualified by three months' residence, but only 88 members supported his view, and 295 voted with Mr. Stansfeld, giving him a majority of 207. Mr. Stansfeld's Bill did not include "one man, one vote," which Mr. Shaw Lefevre had embodied in a Plural Voting Bill, the second reading of which he had moved on the Wednesday before. He had been met by Mr. T. W. Russell, who proposed to add to it the equalization of constituencies, so as to make "one vote, one value." The suggestion was eagerly caught at by the

Tories and Dissentients, who rejected Mr. Lefevre's Bill by 243 to 196, and then passed Mr. Russell's "one vote, one value" motion by 237 to 189.

The election campaign may be said to have begun on the day after Mr. Stansfeld's victory. In a debate on the Vote on Account on the 26th of May, Mr. Gladstone asked for some foreshadowing of the probable termination of the Session. Mr. Balfour responded with the admission that the time for such a statement could not be very far distant. In this vague fashion it was made certain that the dissolution was at hand. On the same day a meeting of the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation was held at Birmingham, and at night Lord Rosebery addressed a great meeting in the Town Hall. Speaking of the resistance to a Home Rule measure he said :—"We hear from the fanatics of all parties of their resolution to die in the last ditch rather than allow any such measure to be carried. So, after passing all these lines, after an arduous struggle through the Commons, after an impossible struggle through the House of Lords, we are to come to this ditch, in which we shall find not only the men of Ulster and the House of Lords, but the Duke of Devonshire and the Liberal Unionists of Birmingham. Some people, even some institutions, may find in that last ditch a grave." On Saturday the 28th Sir William Harcourt wound up a great Liberal campaign in the Home Counties by a speech at Braintree. He spoke of Lord Salisbury as "the Malaprop of politics," and said of Mr. Goschen, who once declared that he would never give a blank cheque to Lord Salisbury, that he had handed over a whole bookful of blank cheques. "Nothing could induce Mr. Goschen a few years ago to tolerate a Small Holdings Bill. But he has tolerated it. He would never consent to Free Education—it was so Socialistic. But he has consented. He would never agree to the revision of judicial rents in Ireland. But he has revised them. And, the most ductile of politicians, I think there is no reason why, in time, the blank cheque shall not



be filled up with Protection, and we shall see this Unionist Free Trader an avowed Protectionist."

The election campaign was opened in London on the last day of May, by a speech from Mr. Gladstone to a great meeting of the London Liberal and Radical Union at the Memorial Hall. Mr. Causton, who took the chair, asked for "Home Rule for London, in the shape of full municipal power," and Mr. Gladstone responded with the assurance that "there is no power anywhere given to a municipal body for the effective government of the space within its lawful control, which ought not to be equally conferred on its greatest municipality." He said, however, that there was no hope of making rational progress with other demands till the "tremendous impediment and obstacle" of the Irish question was got out of the way. In speaking of Lord Salisbury's threat of rebellion in Ulster, Mr. Gladstone used an expression which was taken hold of by the whole Ministerial party—

"I say that the imputation to Ulster of the intention or likelihood of its rebelling against the law of the country proceeding from the supreme head of the Imperial Parliament—I say that man, be he whom he may, is a calumniator of Ulster. And Lord Salisbury ought so to be stigmatized in the face of his countrymen. No, gentlemen, I don't believe in these most culpable imputations upon any body of Irishmen. What I have had occasion to say on the other side, with regard to the land disturbances and so forth, is this : no doubt there are in Ireland, as there are everywhere, a certain small proportion of fools and of rogues ; and a portion of these fools or rogues may very likely be attracted by these astounding intimations which, under the veil of prophecy, cover menace of the law of the land, and of the supreme authority ; but be they what they may, that law of the land has always been competent to deal with its fools and with its rogues, and in so dealing it has always received the support—the intelligent, and enthusiastic, and determined support—of the great mass of the community. So, depend upon it, gentlemen, it will continue to receive that support in England, in Ireland, and in Scotland."

The use afterwards made of this part of Mr. Gladstone's speech gives it historic importance, as illustrating the morals and manners of political controversy in 1892. Speaking

of this speech eight days later, Mr. Chamberlain said that one-third of the population of Ireland were opposed to any proposal to establish a Parliament in Dublin which would have authority over the whole of Ireland, and that Mr. Gladstone had spoken of this large proportion of the Irish people as fools and knaves who would have to be compelled to obey. This language, added Mr. Chamberlain, when applied to one-third of Ireland, is the language of incredible stupidity; these are the curses which will come home to roost. This incredible travesty of Mr. Gladstone's words was taken up in the Tory and Dissident papers, and re-echoed by Tory and Dissident speakers. Not one of them took the trouble to verify the description by referring, as my readers can now do, to the actual terms of Mr. Gladstone's speech, and it came to be pretty generally believed among unobservant people, that Mr. Gladstone had called a third of the Irish people knaves and fools. But at this moment there was an epidemic of what Mr. Campbell-Bannerman called *Ulsteria*, and as he said of the Duke of Devonshire, so history will say of most of the Liberal supporters of Mr. Balfour and Lord Salisbury, every week and every month they were getting more *Ulsterical*.

It is impossible to understand the course of public events in the month which preceded the General Election, without taking full account of this *Ulster* movement. While the quarrel among the Irish Nationalists was alienating public sympathy from the Irish cause, an agitation which was especially directed to the religious feeling of the English, Welsh, and Scottish people was carried on in *Ulster*. Early in June the Nonconformist Unionist Association sent to every Nonconformist minister in Great Britain an appeal signed by more than six thousand ministers, elders, deacons, stewards and other officers and members of the non-Episcopalian churches in Ireland. "Being at a distance," said this appeal, "you possibly do not appreciate the power which the Roman Catholic bishops

and priests have over the great bulk of Irish Roman Catholics, and the determination which they display to compel obedience to their directions in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. The Roman Catholic hierarchy claim the right to direct their people in all proceedings where the interests of Catholicity are involved, and also to determine for their people what are the proceedings which affect the interests of their church." This was in effect, said the Address, a claim on the part of the hierarchy to govern Ireland, and as the Roman Catholics are in a majority, Home Rule would enable the claim to be enforced, and consequently no guarantees, material or moral, could be devised, which would protect the Protestant minorities scattered over Ireland.

This appeal was not made in vain. It touched a feeling which most Englishmen retain, and went home to the sympathies of multitudes of men who are Protestant pastors and church members first, and politicians only afterwards. It was skilfully followed up by the Ulster Convention, the most striking, the most costly and the most successful electioneering effort of modern times. The noise of the erection of the great building in which this Convention was to meet rang all through the land. Every step taken in the preparations for the meeting was ostentatiously proclaimed, and nothing was omitted which could add to the impression it was intended to make. When the great building was ready and the date of the dissolution of Parliament had been announced, the Convention was held. On Friday, the 17th of June, Belfast gave itself a holiday, and from all parts of Ireland special trains brought holiday-keeping multitudes to the city. The order and discipline of the crowds were perfect. More than ten thousand men marched to their places in the great hall without a sign of confusion. In less than ten minutes, said the correspondent of *The Daily News*, they were all in their places, "and in a little while more the passages which had been left between the sections of seats were as full as they could



hold." There was a special gallery for distinguished visitors and a platform with seats for seven hundred people. The day's proceedings opened with prayer by the Primate of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Then the vast multitude sang a part of the forty-sixth Psalm, to the favourite tune of the Covenanters, old Dundee. Then followed the speeches, the weakest part of the demonstration. Its strength consisted in the religious bearing given it, with the political object of influencing the votes of evangelical Protestants in the sister island. The contrast presented by Mr. Dillon and Mr. Healy quarrelling over *The National Press*, with this happy family of Protestant religionists praying and singing like their persecuted fathers in a hostile land, made a vivid impression on hosts of weak, but well-meaning people, and Liberal candidates all over the country found a sudden outburst of Liberal Unionism. Men who had been working with them for years went back and joined their opponents. It was a temporary relapse in most cases, but before those who felt it had recovered from the scare, the elections were over.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*THE GENERAL ELECTION.*

THE winding up of the work of the Session began as soon as the Small Agricultural Holdings Bill had been read a third time and passed, on the 27th of May. On the 30th a National Education Bill for Ireland was read a second time by 152 votes to 53, and after some modifications it was got through Committee on the 15th of June, and read a third time and passed on the 16th. The Clergy Discipline Bill met with strong resistance from Mr. Lloyd George and some other members, and Mr. Gladstone's influence had to be strongly exerted to get it through. There was a good deal of opposition in the Lords to the Small Holdings Bill. They modified it in some respects; the Commons consented to their changes, and the measure passed. Meanwhile the House of Commons had refused by 158 votes to 144 to adjourn over the Derby day, but on that day no House could be made; and an understanding had been come to that Supply should be finished for the year, a pledge being given by the Government, that if they were defeated in the elections, Parliament should be called together at once.

The date of the dissolution was not officially announced till the 13th of June. Even then Mr. Balfour did not fix the actual day. He said it would take place in the first half of the week beginning with the 26th. The time was astutely chosen. The election was to be held while the influence of the Ulster Convention on the public mind was still fresh and vivid; and the day of the dissolution was to be so arranged that the polls in the boroughs could not be

held on a Saturday. A few days before the actual announcement, Lord Rosebery made a great speech at Sutton in reply to Mr. Chamberlain's Birmingham oration ; the chief feature of which, Lord Rosebery said, was the extraordinary irritation shown by the orator. On the day the dissolution was announced, the London Nonconformist Council issued an address "to the Free Churchmen of London," signed by the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers as President, urging that indifference is a greater evil than partisanship, and that "the citizen who enjoys the freedom, privileges and ministry of the State and declines to vote in its behalf is a traitor to the nation." The manifesto set forth some social reforms, and said they were vital to the welfare of London and the nation. The day after Mr. Balfour's statement Mr. John Morley, in a speech at Plymouth, asked that the dissolution should be so fixed that it should not be impossible for the polling to take place on a Saturday. On the next day Mr. Morley spoke at Exeter, pointing out that the Tory candidate for that city, Sir Stafford Northcote, said nothing in his election address about Coercion. "It is the play of *Hamlet*, with the part of Hamlet omitted by desire." This description applied to all the election addresses on the Ministerial side. Mr. Balfour did no more than allude to Coercion in an election speech on the same night, at a banquet of the National Union of Conservative Associations in St. James's Hall. He repeated the calumny that the Opposition had "coquetted with crime," and said that the Ministry had put down crime and disorder and preserved the rights and liberties of the minority. The chief feature of his address, however, was an appeal to the City and the City Companies. "To destroy and plunder ancient institutions," he told them, "is a congenial task for the Liberal party"; and he invented for their use the argument that London is not justified in taking a London view of public affairs, because "if London is anything it is an Imperial city, and is bound to take an Imperial view of Imperial affairs." In other words London is to be the Mrs. Jellyby of great



towns, and to forget that patriotism, like charity, begins at home. The Ulster Convention, and Mr. Gladstone's argumentative interview with the Eight Hours' deputation took place on the 17th, and in the House of Commons Mr. Balfour made a somewhat hesitating statement, that the House of Lords could not get through its business in time for the dissolution to take place before Wednesday or Thursday in the fourth week of June. Mr. Gladstone at once pointed out that this was exactly the arrangement which made Saturday impossible as a polling day. But Saturday polls were to be avoided at all risks by the Conservative and Dissident candidates, and Mr. Balfour remained firm, finally announcing on Monday the 20th that Parliament would be dissolved on Tuesday the 28th of June.

Mr. Gladstone had an early opportunity of publicly replying to the Ulster appeal to English Nonconformists and to the Ulster Convention. He had accepted an invitation from the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers to meet some leading Nonconformists at his house on Clapham Common, on Saturday the 18th of June. It was intended to be a social gathering, but the changed political circumstances changed the character of the meeting, and Mr. Gladstone delivered an address which was rightly regarded as an important manifesto to the Nonconformist bodies. "We are driven," he said, "into the field of politics on the side which is connected with religious differences and animosities." Taking as his text the Address to English Nonconformists, he said they were told that they knew nothing about Ireland; but there were three and a half millions, out of the four and three-quarter millions of Ireland, who held opinions antagonistic to those who signed this memorial. "We are asked to pay no attention to the three and a half millions, but to consider the privileged minority as alone knowing anything about the matter." He passed in review the apprehensions expressed in the Address, showed how the Roman Catholic voters of Ireland choose Protestants as members of Parliament,

as mayors, as Poor-law guardians, and even as municipal servants, and asked "Why do not the authors of this paper, instead of endeavouring to create wholesale prejudice, by bitter, unjust and cruel accusations, go to the facts they have got before them?" Mr. Gladstone then spoke of the Papal Rescript as an endeavour by the Tory Government to get Papal interference in Irish politics; and pointed out that we had just seen an English Minister go to the Pope and consult with him as to the regulations under which Her Majesty's subjects in Malta were to be married. He congratulated the Ulster Convention on its moderation, in which it had given a lesson to Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour, and concluded by pointing out the safeguards of the Protestant minority in Ireland.

Mr. John Morley addressed his constituents on the same day. With him, too, the Irish question and the Ulster Convention were the principal themes. In his election address, issued on the 20th of June, Mr. Morley urged "the full transfer of Irish affairs to the effective control of an Irish legislative body sitting in Ireland, and an Irish executive working with it, with full reservation of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament in the final resort." The other matters in the address were those which "find a foremost place in the Newcastle programme." Mr. Chamberlain's address, which was dated the 21st of June, pointed with satisfaction to the Liberal legislation of the Coalition Government, but was chiefly occupied with Ireland, and made much of the Ulster Convention. Mr. Gladstone's address was issued on the 23rd. It put Ireland in the first place, describing "the proposal for which the Liberal party has unitedly contended for the past six years," as "a proposal to set both Parliament and Ireland free—Ireland, for the management of her own domestic affairs, by a local legislature in close sympathy with Irish life; and Parliament, for the work of overtaking the vast arrears of business, and supplying with reasonable despatch the varied legislative wants of England, Scotland, and Wales." Mr. Gladstone

then passed on to those legislative needs which had "been enumerated again and again at the annual meetings of the National Liberal Federation." The address of Sir William Harcourt and his colleague, Mr. Thomas Roe, went over the same ground. "On the great question of the reform of Irish government inaugurated by Mr. Gladstone, we have nothing to add. Six years have passed since that policy was proclaimed, during which it has been exhaustively discussed before the country, and the longer it has been considered, the more it has gathered strength." Other reforms "have been set forth in the policy declared at Newcastle."

While the Liberal leaders thus put Home Rule for Ireland to the front, and the Newcastle programme for England, Wales and Scotland next, the Tory chiefs gave these subjects the same relative prominence. Mr. Balfour devoted the first half of his election address to the Irish problem; and the second half to the carrying forward of the "many social questions which now call for legislative treatment." "We claim," he said, "in the last six years to have carried more beneficial legislation than any Parliament of equal duration, and we look forward to a continuance of that good work." Lord Salisbury, who took the unusual course of issuing an Address to the Electors of the United Kingdom, began with social legislation, and ended with Home Rule. "Under our existing constitution, the working classes," he said, "are evidently powerful enough to obtain any measure which, upon discussion, they generally believe will conduce to their welfare. No party will have the power, or is likely to pursue the policy, of refusing to listen to their unanimous wish. . . . The policy which the present Government is prepared to pursue, is sufficiently indicated in the course they have followed during the last six years." Having thus appealed to the working classes to choose Toryism and social reform, instead of Liberalism and Home Rule, Lord Salisbury turned to the Irish problem, making skilful use of the Ulster Convention and



Appeal. "For the loyal minority in Ireland," he said, "the crisis is supreme. A wrong decision now means for them the certainty of bitter and protracted struggle, culminating probably in civil war, and, it may be, ultimate condemnation to the doom which they dread beyond any other fate—the subjection of their prosperity, their industry, their religion, their lives to the absolute mastery of their ancient and unchanging enemies." More than one-half of the address was devoted to the further expansion, in rhetorical language, of this appeal, and the manifesto concluded, "I pray that you may be guided to shrink from this great outrage on liberty, on gratitude and on good faith." These addresses were types of all the rest. The issue set before the constituencies in the election was, first of all Home Rule or no Home Rule, and next, the Newcastle Programme as against the course which the Government had followed during the past six years.

The long expected dissolution came on the 28th of June. The Queen's Speech spoke of the ratification of the treaty providing for arbitration in the differences with the United States as regards Behring's Sea, and of the Final Act of the Brussels Conference for the Suppression of the Slave Trade, in which, however, some reservations had been made by France. The Small Holdings Act, "the application to Ireland of those educational measures which have been recently adopted in Great Britain," the Clergy Discipline Act, and the Scottish Allotments and Police Acts, as well as "a measure for improving the constitution and proceedings of the Legislative Councils in India," were mentioned as the main achievements of the Session. The year was doomed to comparative legislative barrenness, but among the small acts passed was one to render penal the inciting of infants to betting, wagering, or borrowing money, and another providing that no person under eighteen years of age shall be employed in a wholesale or retail shop, nor in a market, stall, warehouse, or refreshment place for more than seventy-four hours in a week.

Mr. Gladstone set out for Midlothian on the day of the dissolution. The usual manifestations of public sympathy went along with him, somewhat deepened by an unfortunate assault which had been made upon him, on his arrival at Chester on the Saturday before. Something had been thrown at him, probably without any malicious intent, by a woman in the crowd, which had grazed one eye and made it needful for him to go to Scotland in dark spectacles. His reception in the Scottish capital recalled his earlier triumphs, and the world was once more astonished at the energy which an octogenarian statesman could throw into an election campaign. Mr. Gladstone everywhere put the Irish question as the issue on which the election turned, and a Home Rule Bill as the first result of a Liberal victory. In the second place in time and order, but not in importance, he put the main items of the Newcastle programme.

The elections began on the first of July, by the unopposed return of Lord Randolph Churchill for the Southern division of Paddington. On Saturday, the second of July, there were fourteen unopposed returns, among them being Mr. Picton and Sir James Whitehead for Leicester, Mr. Henry Fowler and Mr. C. P. Villiers for East and South Wolverhampton, and Sir Joseph Weston for East Bristol and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach for West Bristol. On Monday, the fourth of July, the polling began. Fifty-six borough constituencies elected their representatives on that day, and the general character of the election was clearly indicated, to the disappointment of both sides. The Liberals gained twelve seats and lost three, leaving a balance of nine in their favour, which, being taken off the Ministerial majority and added to the Liberal minority, would count eighteen on a division. The most conspicuous gains were the two seats for West Ham, the seat at Grimsby where Mr. Heneage was defeated, the success of Mr. Caine at East Bradford, and the changes at Reading, Lincoln, Hereford, and Durham. The chief loss was that of Mr. Henry Broadhurst at West Nottingham, where Colonel Seely, a

Dissentient-Liberal, accepted the Miners Eight Hours' Bill, which Mr. Broadhurst opposed. On the next day Mr. T. Lough unseated Mr. R. Chamberlain for West Islington, but a seat was gained in North Lambeth and one lost in West St. Pancras; elsewhere the gains were four and the losses six. On Wednesday, the 6th, four seats—Bermondsey, Central Finsbury, West Newington, and Walworth—were won by the Liberals in London and seven in the boroughs; the Ministerialists captured six, leaving a balance of five for the Liberals. On Thursday, the 7th, the London Liberals gained five more seats, among them that which Mr. Ritchie had held for St. George-in-the-East in two Parliaments, and which was now won by Mr. Williams Benn by a decisive majority. Mr. J. M. Macdonald won back Bow and Bromley from Sir J. C. Colomb, who gained it in 1886 by "Colomb and No Coercion"; Mr. E. H. Bayley recovered North Camberwell; and Mr. Frye gained North Kensington, which had never been Liberal before. Outside London, Monmouth and East Hull were gained by the Liberals, but some Nationalist seats were lost in Ireland. At the end of the first week, the borough elections showed 39 seats gained by the Liberals, and 18 lost, a balance of 21 against the Government. On the whole count of the first week the Liberal gains were 52 and the losses 20, a balance of 32 in favour of the Liberals. The Ministerial majority which had been 68 at the dissolution was thus reduced to four. The two most marked features of the borough elections were, the maintenance of Mr. Chamberlain's ascendancy in and around Birmingham, and the Liberal advance in London. Twelve of the gains were in London, which alone came up to the expectation of a result "as in 1885." If the other English boroughs had done as London did, they would have elected 111 Liberals and a Nationalist, instead of 93 and a Nationalist.

The polling in the second week followed the general characteristics of the first week. Mr. Gladstone was returned for Midlothian, after a sharp contest, by a majority



of 690; and on Wednesday morning the full count of Monday's polls, and a few of Tuesday's which had been declared on the same evening, showed Liberal gains of 58 seats and Ministerial gains of 21, a balance of 37, counting on division as 74—a Liberal majority of six. The next day's declarations raised the 37 to 49, and the Liberal majority to 30; and on Friday morning it was raised to 40. On the next Tuesday, the 19th of July, the reckoning was 44, but the loss of the Lichfield division reduced it to 42; and the discovery of the mistake in the count at Greenock eventually reduced it to 40. Had the Irish Nationalists held together and kept their own, this majority would have been 50. The full count, after the return from Orkney and Shetland on the 29th of July, gave Liberals 274 and Conservatives 269; Irish Nationalists 72 and Parnellites 9; Dissident-Liberals 46. This made 315 for the Salisbury Government, which still held office, and 355 for the Liberal Opposition. The total number of votes given, counting only the highest on each side where there was more than one vacancy, was 2,277,527 for the majority and 2,050,342 for the minority, a preponderance against the Coalition Government of 227,185.

Parliament met on the 4th of August, and on the motion of Sir John Mowbray, seconded by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Arthur Peel was, for the fourth time, elected to be Speaker. On the evening of the same day there was a dinner of the Eighty Club, with Mr. Bryce in the chair, at which Mr. Edward Blake was the chief guest. The two most significant returns in the election were those of Mr. D. Naoroji for Central Finsbury, and of Mr. Edward Blake, the well-known Canadian orator and statesman, for South Longford. Mr. Blake came to this country to place his long experience of a Home Rule Government at the service of Ireland. A Canadian by birth, but an Irishman by descent, who watched and assisted in the successful establishment of Home Rule in conditions parallel in many respects to those of Ireland, Mr. Bryce truly said of him that he brought

to the aid of the Liberal party in settling the great question of Home Rule, a keen intelligence and proved statesmanship which he believed would prove most valuable aids in the solution of the Irish problem. Mr. Blake's speech at the dinner fully confirmed the impression of his large knowledge of the question, and his power to throw light upon it which Mr. Bryce expressed.

The two Houses of Parliament met for business on the 8th of August. A brief Queen's Speech informed them that the year's business had been completed before the dissolution, and that it was therefore not necessary that Parliament should now continue in Session at an unusual period of the year for the transaction of financial or legislative business. "It is Her Majesty's hope," said the Speech, "that when you meet again at the customary season, you will again direct your attention to measures of social and domestic improvement, and that you will continue to advance in the path of useful and beneficent legislation, which has been so judiciously followed in previous Sessions." The Address, of course, re-echoed this praise of the legislative doings of the Coalition Government, and after a short debate it was adopted by the Lords without a division. In the House of Commons the concluding phrase of the Speech was received with Ministerial cheers and Opposition laughter. The Address was moved by Mr. Barton, and seconded by Mr. Cross, who had to perform, as Mr. Asquith said, the most embarrassing task of formulating the thanks of the House for a perfectly empty table. Mr. Asquith moved to add to the Address an expression of want of confidence in the Government. The Government, he said, had gone to the country for a renewal of their trust. "Never in our political history was a proceeding more deliberately planned or more carefully carried out. They selected the tribunal, they drew the issue, they fixed even the day on which their trial was to take place; yet an adverse verdict has been given. The majority of 1886 is gone. The mandate which the party opposite

received six years ago, has been revoked by the same power that gave it." He concluded a striking speech by inviting the House to execute the judgment the nation had pronounced.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Burt, and the defence of the Government was opened by Mr. Goschen, in a speech in which he denied that Home Rule was the paramount question submitted to the constituencies. Mr. Justin McCarthy and Mr. Redmond supported the amendment on behalf of the two sections of the Irish party; and on the second night Mr. Gladstone resumed the debate in a great speech, in which he showed that the course taken by the Liberal party during the past six years, foreshadowed and determined the policy of the future. To Mr. Goschen's contention he replied, "What does it signify? Suppose it was true, which, in my opinion, it is not, that a portion of members had been returned to this House on one ground, and a portion on another ground, what would that signify in view of the present question, when my right honourable friend has to admit that they have all of them been returned for the purpose of putting a period to the existence of the present Government." He then sketched the outline of the Liberal policy, with Home Rule first, and as to the threatened opposition of the House of Lords he said, "I cannot wonder at my honourable friend the member for Longford experiencing some anxiety as to its further destiny, because undoubtedly there was a period within my recollection—namely, in the time of the Government of Lord Melbourne—when there was a majority of this House favourable to a Liberal policy towards Ireland, but when that majority found itself constrained to be content with passing certain measures through this House year after year, to send them to the House of Lords to be fatally mutilated or altogether rejected. That being so, I must venture to say that I think that when such a Bill has passed this House, springing as it will do out of a tenacious controversy which has lasted for seven years, and which has been carried on with such zeal and ability upon



all sides, and with such diversity of circumstances and such careful consideration of details—I think that when that Bill goes before the House of Lords, it may be justly said that never will the Lords have had before them a greater question than on that occasion, never a greater question as to the Empire at large, never will they have had before them a greater question, possibly, as to themselves.”

This warning to the House of Lords was received on the Liberal side of the House with cheering loud and long. Mr. Balfour in his reply said he was convinced that the electors had returned gentlemen on the other side under an absolutely mistaken conviction. They had returned them under the conviction that they were going to deal with the Newcastle programme. On Thursday the debate was resumed by Mr. Chamberlain, who contended that the efforts of the Liberal party were doomed beforehand to inevitable failure. There was a difficulty in continuing the debate after Mr. Chamberlain sat down. But some Conservatives were unable to arrive till much later, and it had been arranged that the division should not be taken before half-past eleven, so the show of discussion was kept up. It was just past twelve when the House was cleared for the division, and the first teller to return to the table was Mr. Akers Douglas, the Government Whip. The Opposition Whips were longer in coming, and meanwhile Mr. Gladstone walked through the throng at the bar on his way from the division lobby to his seat. The Opposition, already sure of a decisive victory, sprang to their feet and cheered their leader. A minute or two later Mr. Marjoribanks came, and the clerk handed the division paper to Mr. Arnold Morley. The Opposition cheered enthusiastically again. Mr. Arnold Morley then announced that the Ayes were 350, and the Noes 310; speaking, in doing so, the doom of the Coalition Government. On Monday, the 15th, Lord Salisbury announced in the House of Lords the resignation of the Ministry. The Queen at once sent for Mr. Gladstone who thus became Prime Minister for the fourth time.



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